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A PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO

THE PROPHECIES,

**WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR INTERPRETATION AND
FULFILMENT, AND TO PERSONAL EDIFICATION.**

2.

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

**"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do
well that ye take heed."—2 PETER i. 19.**

FOURTH EDITION, MUCH ENLARGED.

**PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE:
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1835.

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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

THE original design of this little work (first published in 1823, under the title of "Practical Remarks on the Prophecies,") was to answer objections made to missionary exertions for the Heathen, on the ground that prior attention was due to the Jews; and also to shew that Christians of all nations had a clear title to the spiritual promises of the Old Testament. As subsequent Editions have been called for, the Author has been led on to a more extensive study of the subject of the Prophecy than he anticipated; and in the last and present Edition to a considerable enlargement of the work, in the hope of making it more generally useful. He has now, in a slight degree, varied the Title, that it may more correspond to the present character of the work.

While still retaining his Original views as to the high obligation of Christians to Missionary exertions, and the right of believers to all spiritual promises, he has been guided, he trusts, to more enlarged and scriptural views of the subject of prophecy; but though it has engaged his attention now for many years, he still feels himself to be a beginner and a learner.

The Author was called upon, by the work being out of print, and inquired for by the public, to reprint it, with the alterations which a fuller study of the subject required. He was not, after having published it, in a position to be silent, especially when his former views had been modified by subsequent investigation. But, besides this, he does not feel it right to withhold what appears to him a *confession of the truth*; our Lord requires this in all his followers, and he is thankful for the opportunity of bearing witness, he trusts, *in meekness and fear*, (1 Pet. iii. 15,) to what he believes to be the truth of scripture, not only where Christians in general concur, but even where it is not in the present day, the generally-received view of brethren whom he loves in our one Lord.

Having been much indebted to many able prophetic writers of the present day, and especially to Mr. Cuninghame, it is with reluctance and diffidence, that the Author has, in some instances, so far differed, as to feel constrained, by not seeing scriptural or historical evidence adequately strong to produce decisive conviction in his mind, to withhold a concurrence in every part of a system, which has evidently occupied deep and lengthened considerations, and which has many things that seem to favour it. He is not the less sensible of the value of their writings, and of the important light which not only Mr. Cuninghame, but many other modern writers, as Mr. Faber, Mr. Keith, Mr. Davison, Mr. Brookes, Mr. Habershon, &c., have shed on this difficult but most important part of divine truth, nor on the cross light thrown by Mr. Brown, Mr. Frère, Mr. Burgh, *Mr. Maitland, &c.* And though prophetic interpre-

tation may be despised by the world, and be neglected as a chaos by one part of the Church, and perplex another part who may not now have light enough to rescue it out of its apparently chaotic state; yet there is solid ground to walk upon; and there is also light to shew that ground, (2 Peter ii. 19,) and to leave those inexcusable who do not take heed to that light till that fulness of time arrive, when the day will shine out and the day-star arise in our hearts.

The bearing of prophecy on the present state of the world, and of our country; on the visible Church of Christ, and the true Church subsisting in that visible Church, is deeply interesting to the Christian Patriot.

Amidst the present shaking and rocking to and fro of the political heavens, every principle is trying to the very uttermost; nothing but what is divine will remain immoveable; our Lord's words must be fully realised, *every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*. Nothing will stand the shock of these days, but that which is above nature, and has infallible truth, Almighty power, and divine grace for its origin and support. And surely the Christian, while conscious of all the evil which is abroad, and that it is often evil, overcome by the mercy of God, that produces good, must rejoice from the heart in every really good result. The abolition of slavery, the diminishing of systems of bribery and corruption, and beneficial reforms in jurisprudence, or in the outward church, will interest and gladden the Christian; while he will be aware, how much, bad principles may have been at work in accomplishing them, and of the dan-

ger amidst these things, of men crying *peace, peace,—when there is no peace*, Jer. vi. 14; and of the tendency of things in our day, ultimately to give that supreme power to the people at large, which, if unrestrained by human or divine institutions, and unchecked and unregulated by the Gospel, may bring on those tumultuous last scenes in which every thing shall be shaken, (Psalm xlv. 2, 3; Heb. xii. 27.) But in that day, *God is the midst* of his people; *their city shall not be moved*; and the chorus of their song shall be, *The Lord of hosts is with us—the God of Jacob is our refuge*. Psalm xlv. 1, 7, 11. The state of Britain is eminently such as to strengthen those holy directions which St. Paul gives to the Gentiles at large, *Be not high minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off*.

Our clearest duty and interest is quietly, yet firmly and zealously, to promote to the utmost, every good work; *be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless*. We cannot be better employed, when our Master comes, than in doing his work; nor in a better state of mind than *waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus*, (1 Cor. i. 7.) Our enemy would, if possible, separate these things as inconsistent; they are not only harmonious, but necessary also to each other's right attainment. The waiting expecting state of mind for such an event, should ever be accompanied by entire deadness to the world, the most diligent improvement of present talents, *and the most zealous labours for meetness for the*

heavenly inheritance. And those who are the most actively engaged in the work of benevolence, and in the carrying forward of Religious Societies, so far from finding any real damper of the sacred flame of zeal, will obtain a most powerful reviver in the assured hope of our Lord's speedy return. It does indeed tend to check and quench all unholy fires of human applause, self-congratulations, magnifying human institutions, dependance on man, and exalting the creature, and it takes away hopes that have no real foundation in scripture. But there is an ample return for all this, in giving motives and hopes of a far superior character, that strengthen the soul to persevere in the midst of all the difficulties of doing good, and save it from all the discouragements arising from disappointments in our fairest expectations; failure of our best laid plans, and the CERTAIN MORTIFICATION OF EVERY DESIRE AND HOPE THAT IS NOT ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD; motives too that are effective to raise man so above this world, as to enlarge to the uttermost of his ability, all efforts for the glory of Christ and the good of man. THE TREASURY OF THIS WORLD'S RICHES has never yet been fully opened IN THE PROFESSING CHURCH, for the service of our Heavenly Master. (Isa. lx. 9.) THE HOPE OF HIS COMING IS THE KEY TO OPEN THAT TREASURY.

Many have supposed that views of the præmillennial Advent of Christ, and the first resurrection of his glorified saints, are necessarily connected with their constant, personal, and visible residence on our earth, and being thus intermingled with men living in the flesh, during the Millennium. It will be seen that whatever may be the *manifestation* of the sons of

God, (Rom. viii. 19.) the view here taken of that reign does not require this; it being here considered, (p. 142, 143, 160, &c.) that its nature has not been so revealed to us as to justify us in coming to such conclusions. We must believe what is written, but not a step beyond. Perhaps the difficulties, which some have felt in admitting the præmillennial Advent and first resurrection, may thus be removed. The arguments for *coming in the clouds*, meaning only a coming in spirit and power, are answered by Mr. Cuninghame in his reply to Mr. Faber.

The author commends the subject with affection and humility to the attention of his beloved brethren in the ministry of every denomination. He trusts that his mind is open to conviction, on being *shown a more excellent way*. But may we all remember that nothing is more dangerous than groundless expectations of peace. The encouraging of them is very much condemned in the Scripture (Isa. xxx. 10. Jer. xiv. 13, 14; vi. 14; xxiii. Ezek. xiii.) May we so act that the reproach of the Lord (as given in Lam. ii. 14.) may never have to rest upon us as ministers of Christ; *Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thine iniquity to turn away thy captivity*. And may we rather obtain that promise, Jer. xxiii. 21; *But if they had stood in my counsel and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings*. These directions may also shew how important it must be to have just and scriptural views of the future, not only for our own acceptance by our Lord, but for the good of all over whom we have influence.

The Author has been the more induced to give an enlarged list of works on Prophecy, as from his having but little turned his attention to the study of Prophecy. When he published his "Christian Student," he said but little on the subject in that work, and has given a very scanty list of works upon it; and this publication, on that point, may now be considered as supplementary to the List of Books in the Christian Student. He has endeavoured to omit no work of importance that he was acquainted with, because it opposed his own views.

The more generally useful parts of the present work, have been included, in several later editions, in the 7th chapter of the Author's Scripture Help, as immediately connected with it.

It has been a material object with the Author, to avoid as much as possible a controversial spirit, and rather to take up the positions with which his own mind is satisfied, as being scriptural, than to enter into any elaborate defence of them, or controvert those of others; his main object being the edification of the Reader.

The sum of the Author's views, and in which sum, so generally and scripturally is it expressed, there are few Christians who cannot concur, may be given in the words of a prayer used at the most impressive and affecting season, in the church to which he belongs. May every reader heartily and fully present this prayer at the throne of grace. "That it may please thee shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss

both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

May the gracious Redeemer bless this little effort, to the increase of scriptural knowledge, the benefit of his own church, and the good of every one who reads it.

B. BICKERSTETH.

*Watton Rectory,
April 20, 1825.*

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO

THE PROPHECIES.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDY OF THE PROPHECIES.

THE Evidence of Prophecy is of all others, the most convincing, satisfactory, and even overwhelming, to a wise, learned, and candid mind. There is such an accumulation of proof upon proof in a vast multitude of improbabilities, there is such a chain of evidence for thousands of years, there is such an impossibility in the very nature of things of any forgery; there is such a growing strength in the evidence, from age to age, to our own times, that the moral conviction is conclusive; we cannot but say, when the subject has been calmly and completely investigated, the finger of God is visible in this—it is his own word.

And this evidence, arising from the past and the present fulfilment of prophecy, is connected with the most elevating and comforting hopes as to all that is

to come; the great things that most concern us as individual believers, and that most concern the Church of Christ, are set before us with the distinctness of history, leading us to the full hope of the richest and most enduring blessedness. The past completion also of prophecy furnishes us with the best rules for understanding what is yet unfulfilled. If it be said there are serious differences among Christian interpreters; these though stumbling to a beginner are not such as at all materially to weaken our conclusions. The differences are rather, as to the modes or time in which the result shall be accomplished, and the exact nature of that result, than the result itself. Nor are they so great as in many of those sciences which men still pursue with the greatest ardour and with many beneficial consequences. O if there were but the same earnestness in pursuing this heavenly science, as stimulates in pursuing earthly sciences, the difficulties and differences, instead of stumbling men and turning them aside, would only increase the zeal of investigation, and the ardent thirst for divine knowledge.

Whosoever considers duly how much of the whole Bible is of a prophetic character, and that our God did undoubtedly design that this part of his word should be studied, and be profitable to his church, cannot but be sensible that the right understanding of the prophecies is a valuable gift to the Christian, and greatly to be esteemed. To understand not only the past, but the present, and the general character of the future according to the Divine Mind, raises us above the petty scenes of this transient world and its little conflicts, into communion with the *Divine Being*; and our minds open to those larger

views by which God would lead his people to the discovery of his wisdom, power, and love, and while on earth, to have their conversation in heaven.

It is not to be supposed that prophecy is only useful as an evidence of inspiration; it is equally useful as a warning of evil to come, and a support under present trials. Thus Noah was preserved from the deluge, and Lot from the destruction of Sodom, and the first Christians from that of Jerusalem; and had the Antideluvians, and the inhabitants of Sodom, and the Jews, attended to prophecy, they would have escaped destruction. Caleb and Joshua believed in the promised possession of Canaan and entered in; while the children of Israel in general perished in the wilderness; Rahab regarded the prophecy (Joshua ii. 9; Heb. xi. 31.) and was saved, while the men of Jericho perished.

The preaching of prophetic truth is also an important duty as we see in the cases of Noah, Daniel, and Jonah. The preaching of it to Nineveh was attended with a national blessing, and a considerable delay of judgment.

Nor must the revelation of prophecy be confounded with the *secret things which belong to God*, but rather placed among those things which are *revealed* and belong to us and our children.

It is most desirable not only that ministers but that Christians in general should give serious attention to this subject, *I could not have you to be ignorant concerning* a most important future prophecy relating to the second advent of Christ, is the Apostle's statement to the Thessalonian Christians. O how infinitely more worthy is this of our attention, than most of those works often of polluting fancy, or mere

controversy, in which so much of modern literature consists; where the principles of this world, and the pittleness of man's doings and glory fill the page, and spread a debasing and earthly influence over our understanding, and our affections; or the imagination and the feelings are excited without being brought out into really good action, and so the best powers of men are deadened and stupified, when real cases of distress, and the self denying work of the Christian life come before them. There is a *willing ignorance* (2 Pet. iii. 5.) respecting the day of Christ which is much condemned by the Spirit of God.

Nor is there any obscurity in the subject that should hinder laymen, ignorant of the learned languages, from acquiring most profitable knowledge.

Bishop Horsley, well competent to speak on such a point, gives these two rules of exposition founded on 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

“(1.) Every single text of prophecy is to be considered as a part of an entire system, and to be understood in that sense which may best connect it with the whole. (2.) The sense of prophecy in general is to be sought in the events which have actually taken place.”

Bishop Horsley then goes on to say “To qualify the Christian to make a judicious application of these rules, no skill is requisite in verbal criticism—no proficiency in the subtleties of the logician's art—no acquisition of recondite learning. That degree of understanding with which serious minds are ordinarily blessed—those general views of the schemes of Providence and that general acquaintance with the prophetic language, which no Christian can be *wanting in*, who is constant, as every true Christian

is, in his attendance on the public worship, and gives that serious attention which every true Christian gives to the word of God, as it is read to him in our Churches, and expounded from our pulpits,—these qualifications, accompanied with a certain strength of memory and quickness of recollection, which exercise and habit bring—and with a certain patience of attention in comparing parallel texts—these qualifications will enable the pious, though unlearned Christian, to succeed in the application of the Apostle's rules, so far at least as to derive much rational amusement—much real edification—much consolation—much confirmation of his faith—much animation of his hopes—much joy and peace in believing, from that heedful meditation of the prophetic word which all men would do well to remember, an inspired Apostle has enjoined.”

It is a beautiful remark of Roos's—“ By the study of the prophetic word, the heart is weaned from the world, placed upon celestial objects, and prepared for entering on the enjoyment of pure, uninterrupted, and eternal bliss.”

If the word of Christ be to dwell in us richly in all spiritual wisdom and understanding;—(Col. iii. 16.) if we are not to despise prophecyings, (1 Thess. v. 20.) if we are to take heed to them as a more sure word; (2 Pet. i. 19.) if they tend to illustrate Providence in dangerous times, to confirm our faith, to stir up prayer, to excite hope, to make us patient in affliction, to bring consolation, and to beget in us the fear of God,¹ then is diligent meditation in the prophetic scriptures a plain duty.

¹ Scripturarum profeticarum diligens meditatio necessaria est, quia (1.) Sunt pars verbi Dei; Col. iii. 16. (2.) Sedulo nobis commendantur.

Taking heed to *the sure word of prophecy* being a duty required in the word of God, no man is justified in neglecting it. However there may be and are prior duties that require our first care and attention, this too must have its due share of regard. There may, indeed, be an exclusive and excessive attention to it, which is wrong. The study, when once the mind and heart are truly interested in it, is so attractive and engrossing, that persons in such circumstances, need a caution not to have their thoughts too much occupied with one part of Divine Truth, and to be told how very possible it is to have the mind wholly filled with the subject of prophecy, and the heart unconverted to God, and the whole man dead in trespasses and sins. Nothing can be more awful than for a man to have a clear view of judgments impending and glories ready to be revealed, and yet take no practical steps for his own personal escaping from the wrath to come, and his own personal attainment of the promised blessedness.

Yet must we not, because of such a case *despise prophesyings*. Nor must we do this, because we have seen another evil very distinctly in our days: many attending with eagerness to prophetic study, and running at the same time to excesses and wildness in things by no means necessarily connected with this study. Satan has never failed to join serious error with revived truth. By this means he sought to discredit the early Protestants, and if men had yielded to this artifice, we should never have had the

tur a Paulo. 1 Thes. v. 20. and a Petro, 2 Pet. i. 19. (3.) Conciliant Providentiam in temporibus periculis, confirmant fidem, provocant preces, excitant spem, suadent patientiam, afferunt consolationem, *signant nuministimorem.*" Gurtleri Systema Theologiæ, 761.

glorious Reformation. We must *separate the precious from the vile* ; we must *try all things, and hold fast that which is good.*

Though the subject of Prophecy has recently, from the remarkable state of the world, and the rise and progress of Religious Societies, justly attracted much attention, yet, some think it attended with so many DIFFICULTIES, that it had better not be considered at all. But the sacred writers so urge us to this consideration, that St. John declares of the most difficult book of prophecy, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.* It is, however, very needful to study this subject with a holy awe on the mind, remembering, that we are considering that which was given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

More or less obscurity attends all predictions previous to their fulfilment; and, even when they are fulfilled, and illustrated by the facts of history, it is allowed that the obscurity of the language, in some degree remains. This has been sufficiently accounted for. Bishop Sherlock remarks, "No event can make a figurative or metaphorical expression to be a plain and literal one: to inquire why the ancient prophecies are not clearer, is like inquiring why God has not given us more reason, or made us as wise as angels. He has given us, in both cases, so much light as he thought proper, and enough to serve the ends which he intended."

Besides, we are living in the dispensation, which, considered as comprising the glory of the latter day, is the great theme of prophecy. As the predictions, then, are admitted to be more or less obscure, till

after they are completed, and perhaps, in some cases, till some considerable time after their completion; the true explication of those which may have their incipient or commencing accomplishment in our own time, must be left to posterity. If the whole course of events belonging to any particular prophecy be not before us, we are not adequate judges of the subject.

There is a moral advantage in this obscurity, similar to that which there is in many of God's dealings with us; in a world where, in an important sense, we are in a state of probation. Light enough is afforded to guide and cheer, quicken and excite the humble and sincere; and darkness enough is left to check the pride of human speculation, and to try the spirit; so that the character of those who do not choose from the love of sin, to see the truth, will be manifested. They will make this obscurity a plausible excuse for rejecting a system of divine truth which the upright mind gladly and gratefully welcomes. The minds of men are thus exercised, strengthened, and enlarged by the necessity of studying this solemn subject in that frame of mind which can alone make it a source of genuine edification.¹

Prophecy is not designed, then, to gratify mere curiosity respecting futurity, nor merely to try and exercise our graces in the view which we take of it;

¹ Bishop Hurd remarks, "Christianity is plainly a state of discipline and probation, calculated to improve our moral nature, by giving scope and exercise to our moral faculties. So that though the evidence for it, be a *real* evidence, and on the whole *sufficient* evidence, yet neither can we expect it to be of that sort which should compel our assent. Something must be left to quicken our attention, to excite our industry, and to try the natural ingenuousness of the human mind."—See Bishop Hurd's valuable Sermons, introductory to the study of the prophecies.

but to encourage the hopes, and refresh the hearts of Christians; to prepare them for times of suffering; and to increase their patience and their zeal by the general assurance of the ultimate triumph of the Church of Christ over all its enemies. It is therefore written just in sufficient obscurity to answer these ends, without our becoming prophets, or perfectly comprehending the predictions previously to the occurrence of the predicted events; and yet it becomes adequately plain, immediately or more remotely after the events may have taken place, to every candid mind, that the God revealed in the Scriptures had foreseen and foretold them. *These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember I told you of them.*

Future things are not, however, to be too closely pried into, that is, not beyond what God has revealed. *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things which he has revealed, unto us and to our children.* Many of those who have attempted particularly to describe future, or even passing events, have, in some particular or other, been found to fail; and have, if they have lived, had to retract their assertions, and restate their views. These things have helped, though most unjustly, to bring the sacred subject of prophecy into contempt: there is no knowledge, human or divine, which may not be rejected, if such a ground of rejection were admitted;—the children of this world are much wiser in their studies. Still we should remember, that though the Apostles and sacred writers in the New Testament, speak of passing events as then accomplishing prophecy, an inspired writer might with authority and propriety say, *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken*

by the prophet, which would require a far greater degree of circumspection in any but an inspired teacher. Let us be content to rest in such general statements as the word of God authorizes, till events have been so completed as to shew what God intended; and let us contemplate the future prospects of the Church with that waiting spirit which leaves to God the unfolding of his own will and purpose,

CHAPTER II.

PRACTICAL RULES AND CAUTIONS.

THE following Rules for the investigation of prophecy, may, it is hoped, assist the Student, and guard him against being carried away by mere speculation; for several parts of the directions here given, the author has been indebted to the last chapter of Vitringa's work. (Typus Doctrinæ Prophetiæ.)

"The interpretation of prophecy (2 Pet. i. 19, 20.) consists in ascertaining the events to which predictions allude, and in shewing the agreement between the images of the prediction, and the particulars of the history. The original word *ἐπιλυσίς* expresses this particular sort of interpretation, that exposition which renders the mystic sense of parables, dreams, and prophecies."¹

1. TO GAIN THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, is the first of all requisites with reference to a due understanding of prophecy, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled. This is clear from our Lord's statement, *when He the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth:*

¹ See Bishop Horsley.

for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and HE WILL SHEW YOU THINGS TO COME. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. No doubt, this promise was in its highest sense realized in the inspired writers of the New Testament, and in the predictions recorded in their writings; but the same Spirit is required to give us understanding of the words of the Spirit. Even the inspired writers needed prayer for this teaching, as we see by the constant prayers of David for divine teaching, and the enquiring and searching diligently of the prophets, and the practical and personal revelation to them of the design of their prophecies. (1 Pet. i. 10—12.)

We must not expect, we need not, that extraordinary illumination of the Spirit which inspired the sacred writers. The ordinary guidance of the Spirit, is however promised to all. (Luke xi. 13.) He removes prejudices which hinder the faculties of knowledge and judgment from attaining even the historical and literal sense of prophecy, and leads men to submit to God's truth willingly. The teaching of the same Spirit is specially needed in things of a spiritual character, relating to Christ and his kingdom, and its blessings and privileges. None can perceive the true and interior sense of these things, but he who is in the faith—a spiritual man—endued both with the understanding and experience of the benefits. If we humbly and earnestly ask the aid of the Holy Spirit with confession of our ignorance and weakness, and even stupidity, he will succour us with his grace, and remove the veil from our eyes and from the things themselves. The record, Zech. iv. 5, 13, 14; Dan. vii. 16; Rev. xvii. 7; and

the enquiries there made as to the prophecies being understood, with the answers given, may shew us how willing God is that we should understand his revealed purposes.

2. A BELIEVING, PRAYERFUL, HUMBLE, SUBMISSIVE, AND OBEDIENT STATE OF HEART is very needful to give effect to every other rule. We must bring to this study a pure and sober mind, free from erroneous anticipations, not thinking slightly of, but reverencing God and his Word, and prepared to admit every part of his revealed will, with the obedience of faith. Eyes single, harmless and simple towards God and his word, are required, not distorted and turned back by men's opinions. This too is a benefit coming from the divine bounty. The aid of the Holy Spirit is to be implored to work in us, these good and holy affections of mind, and to preserve them when wrought, so that he may enlighten the mind, remove the veil, direct us aright, and keep us from things to be avoided. The saints have in all ages acknowledged this to be the work of the Holy Ghost. (Psalm xliii. 3; cxix. 18, 27, 66.) Certainly, *in the light of God we see light*. Psalm xxxvi. 9. He who wants this is in darkness, though he may appear to himself to be especially wise.

3. COMMENCE THIS STUDY WITH THE WORD OF GOD. This is the fountain head; the whole source of all prophetic knowledge; nothing is of any value but as it is founded on, and illustrative of the divine testimony. It is therefore of special importance to read first, and carefully, God's own word; beginning with the earlier predictions, and going on to the close, such easy books as Brown's Harmony of Scripture Prophecies, or Simpson's Key, or Newton

on the Prophecies, will shew you that rich stream of Prophecy which runs through all the word of God. In forming your sentiments on expressions, take an enlarged view of the whole of a prophecy, before you determine the meaning of a particular sentence in it; for some have taken a single sentence, and applied it to quite a different purpose than to its original use; mark what the prophet himself or other Scriptures testify respecting the time and circumstances of the prophecy; in what year he wrote, under what kings, for Judah or for Israel. This may sometimes be ascertained from the things stated; at least, as far as to point out before, or after, what time they were spoken.

4. Take THE PLAIN LITERAL MEANING OF THE EXPRESSIONS where they are not evidently symbolical. Few things have occasioned more perverted views than figurative interpretation of plain expressions. It has thrown away much of the prophetic use and instruction of lengthened and important predictions. There is, indeed, in almost all the prophecies, and especially in the Revelation, a mixture of symbolical and literal expression, but the figure or symbol may, generally, be easily distinguished from the plain letter, which must as little as possible be departed from. This rule may be, and has been abused, but it is still important to bear it in mind, lest, for instance, without scriptural authority we apply to Gentiles what God intended for the Jews, and to the awful destruction of Jerusalem, the much desired blessing of the second coming of Christ for the salvation of his people. In most cases what is symbolical is manifestly so; and there is need only of the ordinary judgment of a sober mind so to interpret it, though

the meaning of the symbol may be more difficult. The literal meaning, as expressed in the text, must, where there is no adequate necessity for leaving it, always be primarily attended to and made out, and adhered to; and this is only to be departed from when necessity, the context, or subsequent inspiration directs us to a symbolical, or enlarged meaning. Thus the book of Revelation has by applying the name Babylon to Rome, and by varied uses of expressions of the Old Testament, led us to expect in subsequent events of the Roman Empire, a fulfilment in the symbolical Babylon, of those predictions that have not been yet fulfilled in the history of the literal Babylon.¹

5. DILIGENTLY COMPARE ONE PART OF SCRIPTURE WITH ANOTHER. No rule is more important for the right investigation of prophecy than this. One scheme, one argument, runs through, not only the more prophetic parts, but the whole volume of Scripture. They are parts of the entire work of a single mind—God himself. They all proceeded, as Horsley observes, from one Author—the Holy Ghost; “that omniscient mind to which the universe is ever present in one unvaried, undivided thought!—the entire comprehension of the visible and intelligible world, with its ineffable variety of mortal and immortal natures;—that mind in which all science, truth, and knowledge is summed up, and comprehended in one vast idea!” Moses and Elias, and we may add, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, David, and the whole choir of prophets, (as Vitringa puts it,) here confer together between themselves and Christ (Mat. xvii. 3.) Thus shall we be taught the entire harmony and

¹ This rule will be farther noticed in a distinct Chapter.

agreement between them; and that each speaks nothing but what the whole speaks. God has also graciously given links or clauses in one prophet, parallel with those of another, the combination of which throws light on the connection of one prophecy with another; just as the comparison of one statement of doctrine with another throws light upon the general truth revealed. For instance, the Revelation is full of references to former Prophets, and contains a concentrated index, and an analytical view of the chief substance of prophecy unaccomplished when it was written.

Bishop Horsley in his four Sermons on 2 Pet. i. 20, 21, has many striking remarks illustrative of this rule, and shewing that no prophecy of scripture is made its own interpreter or of self-interpretation. He remarks "The maxim is to be applied both to every single text of prophecy, and to the whole. Of any single text of prophecy, it is true that it cannot be its own interpreter, for this reason: because the Scripture prophecies are not detached predictions of separate independent events, but are united in a regular and entire system, all terminating in one great object—the promulgation of the Gospel, and the complete establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Of this system every particular prophecy makes a part, and bears a more immediate, or a more remote relation to that which is the object of the whole. It is therefore very unlikely that the true signification of any particular text of prophecy should be discovered from the bare attention to the terms of the single prediction taken by itself, without considering it as a part of that system to which it unquestionably belongs, and without observing how it may stand con-

nected with earlier and later prophecies, especially with those which might more immediately precede, or more immediately follow it. Again, of the whole of the Scripture Prophecies, it is true, that it cannot be its own interpreter. Its meaning never can be discovered without a general knowledge of the principal events to which it alludes. Every particular prophecy is to be referred to the system, and to be understood in that sense which may most aptly connect it with the whole, and the sense of prophecy in general is to be sought in the events which have actually taken place."

6. CAREFULLY MARK THE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECIES. There is much that is symbolical and figurative, but you will find few symbols of the meaning of which the word of God does not give an account. This is often immediately connected with it; like a key tied by a string, close to the lock, that you may have every help for the interpretation; at other times it is given in other parts of the scripture. The New Testament frequently also furnishes a divinely inspired interpretation to the Old Testament prophecies. (See Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, and Luke iv. 21.) This will give you not only a clear guide to such prophecies, but a help to the right interpretation of similar predictions. It is a just remark of Mr. Allix:—"The latter prophecies having always added some new light to those who prophesied before them; it is a good and sure method to expound the old ones by the new, who illustrate the thoughts of those who went before them, and who lay them open in a larger view and brightness. Thus, for example, we find the right sense of several Psalms concerning the return of the Jews from the

captivity at the second coming of the Messiah, by what is said in Isaiah, chap. xii, wherein he gives the sense of several Psalms."¹

7. NOTE, AS ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN, THE LINE BETWEEN WHAT HAS BEEN FULFILLED AND WHAT HAS NOT. If we do not this, we may weaken the strong, clear evidence of divine inspiration from fulfilled prophecy. Yet distant events are so intermingled in almost all the prophecies, as to require careful discrimination to separate the fulfilled from the unfulfilled. The passage which our Lord read from Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, in the synagogue at Nazareth is a striking lesson. He read just as far as it had been fulfilled, and then *closed the book*, and said *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*, what follows in Isaiah. *The day of vengeance of our God* had not then arrived. It is a remark of Irenæus, very useful to keep in view, though too generally and strongly expressed, "All prophecies before they are fulfilled, are enigmas and ambiguous to men, but when the time arrives, and the event predicted is accomplished, then they have a clear and certain exposition." This principle may be extended to the whole scheme of prophecy, which will indeed, not be fully developed, till God's purposes are accomplished in the events foretold.

The PARTICULAR explanation of UNFULFILLED prophecy, is either not to be attempted, or stated with the greatest humility. The GENERAL meaning may be clear, when we go quite beyond our province in attempting to point out the particular mode of its fulfilment. Let us rather attain Habakkuk's spirit. *I*

¹ See Allix on the Psalms, p. xxv.

will watch to see what he will say unto me. (Hab. iii. 1—4.)

8. ATTEND TO THE PROPHETIC MEANING OF THE PSALMS AND PARABLES. We have been so accustomed to use them merely for devotional, practical, and moral purposes, as almost to lose sight of their character as prophecies. Mr. Allix says—"I am persuaded that the book of Psalms, has in it a greater number of prophecies than any book of the Old Testament. There are well nigh 50 Psalms quoted several times in the New Testament, which shews how properly our Lord made use of that book to instruct his disciples that he was the Christ. (Luke xxiv. 44.) It is therefore with great reason that the book of Psalms is, and has been constantly read in public by the Church, there being no one in the Old Testament where the faithful may find so much comfort, and so high raptures of devotion, as those with which the Holy Spirit moved David and his fellow prophets concerning the redemption of mankind, and the different stages through which the Church, the mystical body of Christ was to pass before she came to everlasting glory."

"I am persuaded" continues Mr. Allix, "that it is not at all possible to understand them unless one has always an eye to the various conditions of the Church. (1.) As it consisted of the Jewish nation till the coming of Christ. (2.) As composed chiefly of the Gentiles since Christ's coming. (3.) As being prosecuted both under the Roman Empire, and under the Kingdom of Antichrist. (4.) As intended to be delivered from that oppression by our Saviour's second coming. (5.) As it shall be formed anew by the conversion of the Jews to the Gospel. (6.) As it

shall be augmented by the general conversion of all the nations who have not yet owned Christ for the true Messiah. (7.) As being governed during a long time, viz. ten centuries by Christ. (8.) As it shall be attacked by Satan when he shall be loosed in the latter days, after which the final judgment is to follow."

Many of the PARABLES of our Lord are most important prophecies. The remarks of Mr. Greswell, respecting this point in his valuable work on the Parables are instructive. He distinguishes them into two classes (1), moral parabolic examples, and (2), allegorical prophetic histories. Of the latter he enumerates these:—

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| 1. The sower, Mat. xii. | 12. The barren fig-tree, Luke |
| 2. The tares, Mat. xiii. | xiii. |
| 3. The seed growing, Mark iv. 26. | 13. The great supper, Luke xiv. |
| 4. The mustard seed, Mat. xiii. | 14. The Prodigal, Luke xv. |
| 5. The leaven, Mat. xiii. | 15. The labourers, Mat. xx. |
| 6. The hidden treasure, Mat. xiii. | 16. The pounds, Luke xix. |
| 7. The pearl, Mat. xiii. | 17. The wicked husbandman, |
| 8. The draw net, Mat. xiii. | Mat. xxi. 33. |
| 9. The good shepherd, John x. | 18. The wedding garment, Mat. |
| 10. The servants waiting, Luke | xxii. |
| xi. 36. | 19. The virgins, Mat. xxv. |
| 11. The steward, Luke xi. 42. | 20. The talents, Mat. xxv. |

These he considers historical and prophetic vehicles of facts, rather than doctrines, and that in all these there is either clear or presumptive indication of their being, in general allegories, and each in particular prophecies, and that it is a farther confirmation of this truth, that to ten of the number recorded by Matthew and Mark, the phrase *the kingdom of God or heaven is like*, is prefixed, that to the 13th and 16th recorded by St. Luke, it is virtually prefixed. The subject matter of the Parables consists of a *series of Prophecies*; the *mysteries* or secrets of the

Kingdom of God; the concealment of which for a time was wise and necessary (Mark iv. 11, 12.)

There are some remarks on our Lord's seven parables, Mat. xiii. (as descriptive of a connected series, indicating progressively the several stages of advancement of the mystical kingdom of Christ;) in the works of Alexander Knox just published. See Vol. L. p. 407—426. These views may be considered in connection with those sentiments of prophetic writers, like Cocceius, Gurtler, Vitranga, and Venema, who have regarded the history of the Christian Church under seven periods, and the Epistles to the seven Churches as descriptive of these periods. Mr. Knox considers (1) The parable of *the Sower* as describing the commencement. (2.) *The tares*, the mixed state of the Church. (3.) *The mustard seed* grown into a tree, its expanded state. (4.) *The leaven*, the hidden state of piety in the darker ages. (5.) *The treasure hid in the field*, the varied awakenings with its accidental adjuncts. (6.) *The pearl*, vital Christianity in its purity. (7.) *The net, like the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet*, marking the final close.

9. STUDY AND COMPARE THE BEST INTERPRETERS OF PROPHECY. Sir Isaac Newton said most justly, that among the interpreters of the last age, there was scarcely one of note who had not made some discovery worth knowing, and this observation is true to the present day. This may much encourage search-

¹ Mr. Knox gives some interesting illustrations of these Parables. He is an original writer; but with some fanciful things; on Justification the reader, who is disposed to be carried away by Mr. Knox's genius, learning, and piety, would do well to consult Bishop Barlow's Letters on that subject.

ing books of an established character on this subject, and comparing different opinions and systems. You will see, indeed, more of the difficulties, but you will have more materials for forming your own judgment. Only it is needful to remember that there is a broad difference between a human interpretation, and an inspired prophecy. *What is the chaff to the wheat?* The prophecy will stand for ever, and become brighter and clearer as years roll on, the human interpretation may be weakened or confirmed, strengthened and increased, or overthrown, just as it accords with the infallible mind of God. This is eminently true in the interpretation of mystical numbers, and their commencement and termination.

However desirable it is first to study the simple word itself, yet to expect to understand the more difficult parts of prophecy by our own meditations on them, without the help of others, is a vain thing. The Ethiopian Eunuch needed a Philip to understand the prophecy respecting Christ's first coming; and we need the aid of the lengthened and patient studies of learned and pious men as well as our own deep meditations, to understand the predictions of his second coming. Such men have not laboured, prayed, and written in vain.

But do not make a mistake on the other side. It must not be imagined from the long list of books at the end of this Treatise, that such an extended study of human writings is requisite to a right understanding and use of the prophecies in general, much less of any part of them. It is convenient to have such a list, and it may assist in pointing out works to those pursuing any particular branch of this study. *But it is by no means necessary in order to*

read the prophecies with advantage, to have such an apparatus. They who keep the mystery of faith in a pure mind and conscience, and with holy purposes, humbly set about the meditation and search of this word, may, though not learned in human knowledge, draw from it necessary instruction, moral discipline, comforting hope, and assured faith. They will every where meet the testimony of Jesus, nor can they overlook those prophecies which describe his person, character, history, kingdom, and its privileges. And if they attain not all the meaning of other prophecies, and cannot demonstrate their fulfilment from history, they may yet collect from them, general statements for their edification, nor will they doubt of their fulfilment; thus all kinds and degrees of men believing and loving the name and word of God, may receive solid advantage from reading the prophetic word.

10. ATTAIN HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE. This is not so difficult with regard to the interpretation of prophecy as might be imagined. The historical knowledge here wanted, is not the history of the human race (though that is glanced at and comprehended), but the history of nations connected with the Church of God. Dean Woodhouse observes—"When the people of God were to become subservient to the four universal monarchies, the character and succession and fates of these monarchies were predicted; but the main object, continually kept in view, was their deliverance from these successive yokes by the superseding dominion of the Messiah. This supreme and universal dominion gradually and finally to prevail, appears to be the grand object of all sacred prophecy; and revolutions of worldly power among the Gentiles, seem to be noticed only at those times when they

impede or promote it." Historical knowledge therefore, is not of importance to that extent which some press, and which would render it impossible for an unlearned Christian to pretend to know the meaning of plain predictions in the Bible. Prophecy deals not in minute and recondite things, but in large, broad, comprehensive features. A comparatively slight knowledge of history, such as Josephus, Milner, Mosheim, Fox, Prideaux's Connection, Rollin, Gibbon, a history of the Jews and of the French Revolution, furnish, will go a great way in throwing historical light on the word of prophecy. It is a remarkable Providence that the infidel historian Gibbon should furnish the chief historical light to interpret the books of Daniel and Revelation.¹

Prophecy is the narration of things to be done, history that of things done: prophecy cannot therefore be complete without history, for its fulfilment must be sought in history; history is not only the light of the times, but the light of prophecy. But still it should not be understood that no one can read the prophetic word profitably, unless accurately instructed in history. This is the attainment of very few, and if so, few would attain the advantage of the study of prophecy, and this most noble study would be confined in a narrow compass. It is sufficient therefore for ordinary students to have some more compendious knowledge of the greater changes which have happened in the state of the world, and especially of the church. But in a public interpreter of the prophetic word, a more accurate knowledge of history and greater skill is

¹ Mr. Davis published an examination of part of Gibbon's History, and a reply to his Vindication, 8vo. 1778-9. See also Bishop Watson's *Apology for Christianity*.

required.¹ *Geographical* knowledge should be added to *Historical*. Reland and Wells, with good scriptural maps, will be valuable helps to us.

11. KEEP IN VIEW THE GREAT END OF ALL PROPHECY, CHRIST JESUS. "To testify concerning Christ as the Messiah and Saviour of the world, was the one grand purpose of the Scripture Prophecies, to which other topics were only collateral and subordinate. Many of these relate to his personal character and office: others to the establishment and progress of his spiritual kingdom. Divines have accordingly arranged the prophecies concerning Christ under two general heads, dividing them into such as relate to his *first* coming, which had their full and entire completion in his person; and such as relate to his *second* coming, comprising a long series of events preparatory to that final close of the Christian Dispensation, some of which are already accomplished, others are now fulfilling, whilst others are still awaiting their completion at some distant period. The prophecies respecting the rise or fall of particular persons, families or states, have reference in most if not all instances to the same object."²

¹ There is in some of the modern expositions of the books of Daniel and the Revelation, a mass of historical and ecclesiastical information, that repays the perusal of those expositions, though it be too often misapplied to the particular prophecy. But it is to be regretted that there is no little manual of history, (as far as the author knows) something on the plan and scale of Edward's History of Redemption, or Bossuet's Universal History, for the express purpose of illustrating prophecy. In such a history, illustrating prophecy as is here suggested, the lesser events are not the things to be dwelt upon, but the greater and more deciding changes that have controuled and overruled the history of nations, and those that are more immediately connected with the church of God. A friend suggested the idea that a Religious History of the French Revolution is a work to be desired in this view. Allison's History, helps to meet this want.

² See Van Mildert's *Sermons*, vol. ii. 353, 354.

Whatever is told us of one to come, not named, but emphatically glorious, which cannot be shewn to be fulfilled in any other, is to be viewed as belonging to Christ. Deut. xviii. 18; Psalms viii, xvi, xxii, xl, lxix, lxxxviii, cxviii. 22, 23; Isaiah iv. 2; vii. 14, 15; xlii. 1; liii. 1, 2; Zech. iii. 8; xii. 10. The same scriptures declare also his sufferings and humiliation mingled with his glory. Psalm lxix; Isaiah liii. The scripture turns on this point, his sufferings and his glory; its lines meet in this centre, and this makes the study of it so sweet and delightful to one who loves his Saviour. It all relates to his beloved Master's person, coming, return, kingdom and glory.

12. REMEMBER ONE GREAT USE OF PROPHECY IS THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE HEART. It is not the mere understanding of the meaning of the prophecy, that is valuable, unless it has a holy and edifying influence on our life. It is not merely *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy*—but there is a farther end—and *KEEPETH those things that are written therein.* (Rev. i. 3.) The design of the prophecies is not only instruction and consolation, but also being made holy. The varied times and circumstances of the Church described in the prophets, teach us the peculiar duties suitable to those times, and strongly bind us to the performance of those duties. Thus we are taught how we may stand in the post of observation as faithful watchmen—steadily regarding the steps of Providence, and looking to the glorious end and issue of all the griefs and afflictions of the church, and of our own also, if we are steadfast in faith and hope, breathing out the ardent desire and hope of the church, *even so come Lord Jesus.*

We speak not as if prophetic knowledge and an expectation of the near Advent of Christ were necessary to our salvation. A great difference must be made between what is necessary and what is profitable. What is necessary, is simply *faith working by love*. But things may be very helpful, and profitable, and quickening to our souls, that are not needful to the existence of spiritual life. And in this view it must be remembered how much the promises of salvation are connected with *looking for Christ*. (Heb. ix. 28; Titus ii. 13; Phil. iii. 20; 2 Pet. iii. 12;) and *loving his appearing*. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) A practical expectation of the coming of Christ has many special promises, and is a peculiar character of those who will be accepted of him in the day of his appearing. And this is the more important to us now, when so distinct and extended a testimony has been borne to this truth by the servants of Christ. By not attending to and keeping the saying of prophecy, you lose also a blessing which God has promised. (Rev. xxii. 7.) And who is so spiritually rich as to be willing to lose one blessing?

Prophetic, however, like all other parts of divine knowledge, may only *puff up*; and we should be sensitively alive to this danger. There can hardly be imagined a more subtle snare of the enemy than that a man should become acquainted with an important part of divine truth, obnoxious even to Christians in general, that he should *have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge*, that he should confess the truth and suffer reproach for it, and all the while have merely the system and theory, and be without the grace of the truth. What a prayer is that of our Lord, *sanctify them by thy truth!*

Truth, applied to the heart by the Holy Ghost, is sanctifying. It should be our desire, that our religion may not be merely that which nature can attain, but that which by its fruits is proved to be supernatural and divine; thus shall we now be *the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; and so shall we be found at the last to have *oil in our vessels with our lamps when the Bridegroom cometh*.

To these practical Rules the author would add a few CAUTIONS.

1. DO NOT BE STUMBLER AT THE VARIOUS AND OPPOSING INTERPRETATIONS OF LEARNED AND GOOD MEN. In events whether fulfilled, or yet to be fulfilled, where we have no infallible interpreter, this was to be expected. It is so in all subjects human and divine. Even the inspired *prophets themselves, who prophesied of the grace given, inquired and searched diligently, searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them, did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow*. If they had to inquire and search diligently to ascertain dates and periods, and only obtained a general knowledge *that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now repeated unto you*; no wonder that human writers come to different conclusions. But do not imagine on that account that the search is vain for you, and the study hopeless and unprofitable. Far, very far from it. Leading views you may obtain of the utmost value.

Bishop Van Mildert justly remarks “those who duly consider the prodigious extent and complicated nature of the plan of prophecy, will not only be convinced that to devise and execute it, is far beyond

the power of man, but will be prepared to meet with something of intricacy and even obscurity in the detail of the plan, which the limited powers of the human understanding may not be able completely to unravel. They will perceive that a scheme of divine wisdom to be carried on through all ages of the world, and embracing an infinite diversity of times, persons, and places, must require means to conduct and unfold it, of which it is impossible that man should be a competent judge. Hence they will be led to examine the subject with humility and reverence.—But whatever shade of doubt and difficulty may still hang over some particular predictions (concerning which the most learned and sagacious may continue to entertain some difference of opinion), it is nevertheless impossible for any unprejudiced persons to deny, that there is a prodigious mass of solid and uncontrovertible evidence to be collected from history in verification of the Scripture prophecies.”

They are excellent remarks of a very able modern writer “Justice is to be exercised in judging of the opinions and statements of others. This constitutes candour. It consists in giving a fair hearing to their opinions, statements and arguments, and weighing fairly and honestly their tendency. It is therefore opposed to prejudice, blind attachment to preconceived opinions, and that narrow disputatious spirit, which delights in captious criticism, and will hear nothing with calmness that is opposed to its own views; which distorts or misrepresents the sentiments of its opponents, ascribing them to unworthy motives, or deducing from them conclusions which they do not warrant, *candour* accordingly may be considered

as a compound of justice and the love of truth. It leads us to give due attention to the opinions and statements of others, in all cases to be chiefly solicitous to discover truth, and in statements of a mixed character, containing perhaps much error and fallacy anxiously to discover and separate what is true. It has accordingly been remarked, that a turn for acute disputation and minute and rigid criticism is often the characteristic of a contracted and prejudiced mind, and that the most enlarged understandings are always the most indulgent to the statements of others, their leading being to discover truth.¹ The only danger in this is, lest any thing of a doubtful and sceptical spirit should creep upon us. It is to be guarded against by deepest reverence for the word of God, and entire submission to all its plain statements.

2. Remember an important DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FACTS PREDICTED, AND THE TIME WHEN THEY SHALL TAKE PLACE. Respecting the facts predicted, we may attain a much greater degree of knowledge and confidence than we can respecting the time. The history of the interpretation of prophecy shews this. The most able expositors² have anticipated events. Their works are not useless on that account, indeed, for the explanation of the event may be correct, when that of the time is wrong. I deny not also that it is our duty to search into the time and to state our conclusions modestly, especially as we

¹ See that truly valuable work, *The Philosophy of the moral feelings*, by John Abercrombie, M. D. p. 57, 58, a book well calculated to undermine and overthrow many false principles of modern liberalism or infidelity.

² This is remarkably the case with the writings of Mede and Cresser.

come nearer the end, when there are special promises of light and knowledge. (See Dan. xii.) But, as Gurtler justly remarks, "we should not rashly or confidently define the moments of future time, in which those remarkable works of God, which are to take place in the world and in the church, are to be accomplished. (Acts i. 7. Mark xiii. 32.) To hold the thing revealed tends to piety and comfort; the time of that which is future, if scripture shews any thing concerning it, it is right and proper to meditate upon, but accurately to fix the time before it arrives, is a fruitless attempt."¹

The chief triumph of those who would discourage the study of prophecy, has been the failure of many who have specified particular times; and it may be asked, Why has God, who promised such a blessing on the study of prophecy, permitted this? Not merely to humble the pride of human wisdom, nor merely to make prophetic writers more cautious, but also with regard to his people, to try their faith in the clearly predicted event, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the time; and with regard to his enemies, who hate him and his word, that they might be stumbled and hardened; and so their wickedness manifested, and the divine justice in their everlasting condemnation be made clear.²

3. DO NOT BE OFFENDED AT THE REPROACHES TO WHICH THE PROFESSED EXPECTATION OF THE COMING

¹ See Gurtler's *Systema*, p. 55.

² If the mistakes as to particular times of Mede, Lloyd, Allix, Jurieu, Cressener, and others, had deterred men from pursuing these studies or from availing themselves of their works, we should never have had the valuable researches into Prophetic times of Prideaux, Sir I. Newton, Vtringa, Bishop Newton, Woodhouse, not to speak of living Expositors.

OF CHRIST EXPOSES YOU, from all classes of men. It is the generation truth, that is, the one which is peculiarly important in this generation, and opposes the whole stream and current of men's opinions by the simple testimony of God's word, and therefore it is the truth every where spoken against. A well instructed Bible Christian will not be stumbled at this, and when he has carefully searched the foundations, and is perfectly satisfied that he has the word of God to rest upon, will hear with the utmost calmness the charges of the Millennarian Epidemic, dangerous novelties, fanciful schemes, and a thousand other names by which men will endeavour to swamp all these truths without coming to the plain statements of scripture. The most painful thing is, when the truly pious join in these things, and, like Peter to his Lord, say, *that be far from thee*; but he who has once himself been thus prejudiced, and has seen in his own painful, past, personal experience, that "prejudice had neither eye nor ear," will readily make allowances for such a state of mind, and by patient forbearing, and loving manifestation of the truth, commend it to the consciences of all men.

4. GUARD AGAINST HUMAN SYSTEMS. It is very observable how much some men have been carried away by a favorite system, so as to think that it is entwined with every part of the word of God, and explains every difficulty. They seem to suppose, that one key will turn all the locks, and open every door of every room and every cabinet in that room. There are many locks in Scripture; outside locks and inside locks, and we must take the particular key which will open, first, the general lock, and then *the one we want to have opened*; or we shall only

wrest the Scriptures. But here is our comfort—the Bible itself contains the keys for its treasures, and the Holy Spirit will guide us (if diligently sought for) into all truth.

Each human system also is more or less connected with some error, and those who pursue prophetic studies, and hold the speedy coming of our Lord, have special need to be on their guard against those errors which the enemy has contrived to associate with that truth. Some of these errors are more serious than others, but the tendency of all error is to famish the soul. We may see hence persons holding the highest and newest flights of doctrine, and yet proud, censorious, dogmatical, severe, covetous, worldly, lovers of pleasure, and sunk in earthly lusts. O how offensive this must be to the pure, holy, and heavenly Saviour! It is a great preservative against such things, to keep constantly before us the spirit which our Lord commends in the beatitudes, and practical Epistles like those of St. James and St. Peter. *To ask also for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, is the means to find rest for our souls.*

If we are indebted to another for first views of divine truth, we are greatly in danger of leaning upon him, and being carried away with all his views. This is to lean on an arm of flesh, and not on the Lord, (Jer. xvii. 5.) and to refuse to follow the beautiful example of the Bereans, who went no farther with the Apostle himself, than a diligent search of the Scriptures justified. (Acts xvii. 11.)

5. BE NOT AFRAID TO SUSPEND YOUR JUDGMENT about more obscure and hidden things. Vitrunga applies Isaiah xxxviii. 16. here, "he that believeth

shall not make haste; he will resign to the Deity the scope of executing his vast designs. It is thus our blessed Saviour taught his disciples to wait the event of his prophecies, *In your patience possess ye your souls*, Luke xxi. 19. Where the completion is still future, we must not indulge our conjecture, but as becomes the faith and moderation of Christians, those things which are spoken indefinitely, and are not determined by parallel prophecies, we should consider, as reserved in the hands of God, with respect to the mode and persons, times, places, and other circumstances of their completion." Whether Christ and his saints shall personally be visible in their reign over the earth; what may be the precise nature of his kingdom, or of the destruction of his enemies which precedes its establishment; these and a thousand similar questions may, without any damage to the soul, be left in the hidden state in which they seem now to be left by the Scriptures, till God shall throw more light upon them by the researches of his servants, or events shall fully develope them.

6. NEGLECT NOT PROPHECY BECAUSE OF THE ERRORS, controversies, and misinterpretations, OF THOSE WHO HAVE INTERPRETED IT. It is perfectly clear, by events, that those who have written on this subject have made great mistakes; we have the advantage of living in a latter period, and of having these mistakes manifested. Some, in these days, prominent in their prophetical statements have, in the Author's view, fallen into doctrinal errors; an unchristian spirit of judging, and condemnation of others, or even serious delusion; or a rash spirit of throwing aside all preceding labourers. Was

it not the artifice of the enemy to destroy the power of those weighty truths which prophetic writers have distinctly brought forward, and especially to turn the attention of the Church from the prophetic word? There is however a plain direction, (1 Thess. v. 20.) *Despise not*, (ἐξέθετε, do not set at nought, or count for nothing), *prophecies*. The same thing took place at the time of the Reformation, and Gurtler has some valuable remarks upon it. He says, that "After the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Gospel being recovered from antichristian darkness to light, many Interpreters employed themselves in the Exposition of the Prophecies; but at the end of that century the ardour for this most divine study began to cool in the churches and schools," and he states one principal cause of this lamentable issue to be, the unhappy disputes which arose among Protestants; in Germany between the Lutheran and Reformed; and in Belgium between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants: from the origin of these disputes, controversial volumes were sent forth, rather than Commentaries on the Sacred books. Afterwards another thing arose, from which the study of prophecy was not only despised by irreligious men, but also by learned and even pious persons. Some came to treat of it with unwashed hands, and an unsuitable mind; for enjoying riches of genius and facility of writing, and blandishments of language, they promulgated the fulfilling of prophecies in that immediate nearness of time and place, which inconsiderate hope, impatience under undeserved calamities, and too great love of their country dictated. Gurtler shews also, how others failed in *their predictions* of an immediately happy

state of the Church ; and adds, “ books of this kind were eagerly read, translated into different languages and filled the minds of the curious ; but, by and bye, the event not answering to the promises, where only the vanity of the writer was to be reprehended, the holy prophetic Theology was, after the manner of the age, carped at, and despised ; and the wisdom of the prophecy of the supreme King of Kings, knowing, determining, and foretelling all things, was given up to oblivion.” He then shews how God rescued, by his Spirit, the Church out of this state, by raising up such men as Brightman, Mede, More, and Hofman.

Gurtler then, after giving the System of Mede and others, has these interesting reflections :—“ I will not carp at the structure delineated by these learned and pious men, or subject it to my censure, for I had rather congratulate them on that eternal blessedness in which they now enjoy God, and more thoroughly and entirely know his works. In this life *we know in part, and we prophecy in part*, but *when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away*, and we shall clearly see these things which we now conjecture, or inquire into with much labour ; or altogether are ignorant of. As the human mind of the Son of God, which with the angels knew not on earth the day and hour of judgment (Mark xiii. 38.) in heaven, had given to him, and perceived the whole history of the world and the Church, Rev. i. 1—3.”

May we learn lessons from past experience, and especially the lesson of not neglecting any part of God’s word, and being turned aside by the enemy to *despise prophecies* from the faults of those who

have studied it. God has given increasing light age after age, to his church on this subject, and should even some material parts of the views of the leading modern interpreters turn out to be præanticipations, or unfounded interpretations of what God has foretold, may we notwithstanding such stumbling blocks, *take heed to that which is still the more sure word of prophecy, the light shining in the dark place, and only pray the more earnestly that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that we may try things that differ* (δοκιμαζειν τα διαφεροντα) *and be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.*

Plan of Study of Prophetical Writers.

The author having several times been requested to give a little plan of study subjoins the following:—

Older Works.

Hurd's Introduction to the Study of Prophecy.

Mede's Key to the Apocalypse, and Letters.

Sir I. Newton on Daniel and the Apocalypse.

Bishop Newton on the Prophecies.

Cressener's Demonstration of the Revelation.

Cressener's Judgments on the Romish Church.

Home's Millennium, new Edition.

Modern Works.

Keith's Evidence of the Christian Religion.

Woodhouse on the Apocalypse.

Abdiel's Essays.

Cuninghame's Præmillennial Advent.

Anderson's Apology for the Millennial Doctrine.

Faber's Sacred Calendar, 3 vol. 8vo.

Cuninghame's Answers to Wardlaw, Faber and the Theological Magazine, and his Political Destiny.

Cuninghame on the Seals and Trumpets.

Faber's Restoration of the Jews, 2 vol. 8vo.

Fry on the Second Advent, 2 vol. 8vo.

Greswell on the Parables, Vol. I.

Habershon on the Prophecies.

The Investigator, a Quarterly Periodical.

Latin Books.

Vitringa Typus Doctrinæ Propheticae.

Vitringa Anacrisis Apocalypseos.

Venemæ Dissertationes in Daniel.

It will be easy to enlarge this list from the books in the List at the end. The translation of the "Typus Doctrinæ Prophetica" of Vitringa would be very useful to the English Student of Prophecy.¹

The purpose of Cocceius in his prophetical studies will be a good guide for us in ours. He says—"We therefore, with the blessing of God, will so act, as to attend to the Scriptures (as lucid, and having clear and by no means twisted or forced significations, conformed to itself in all its parts, and shining through the whole body of the sacred oracles according to the sincerity of the Divine Testament, and the truth which is in Christ Jesus) until a most clear sense, satisfying the conscience through the words of the Holy Spirit, shall rise up to refresh us. In which these things shall minister help to us. 1. The proper meaning of words. 2. The conformity or proportion of phrases and sentences. 3. The scope and series of antecedents and consequences. 4. Remarkable examples of the meaning of expressions shewn by the events fulfilling them. It cannot be that the words themselves should fully and exactly, in a series of examples, and in a consistent harmony of prophecies be verified, without its pointing out the mind of the Spirit.

¹ The most important parts have been, since this was written, translated and printed in the Investigator, vol. 4.

CHAPTER III.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING CHRIST.

ON that point which especially concerns our highest interest, even our eternal salvation, and which is the grand theme of all the prophets, from the beginning to the close, there is no obscurity of any moment, the first coming, the atoning death, the perfect righteousness, the resurrection and ascension, the supreme power, and the constant intercession of our Divine Redeemer; the gifts of his Spirit; the subjugation of his enemies, and his certain return. On these points, the predictions are, in the main, clear as the noonday. Even those who deny their application to Jesus Christ, still refer them to the Messiah. Let it ever be remembered, then, that THE PROPHECIES OF SCRIPTURE CHIEFLY BEAR ON THIS ONE POINT, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Their great design is to do honour to him, to manifest the sufficiency of his atonement, and the riches and fulness of his grace, and the nature and glory of his kingdom; that thus we may be led to believe in him, to the salvation of our souls and be filled with joy and peace in believing. It is expressly said, *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, Rev. xix. 10. *To him give all the prophets witness.*

There are many plain, express, and literal pro-

phesies referring to Christ and his kingdom, that have no other application, and cannot be expected to have any other fulfilment than in him. The following instances have been selected as proving this:—Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6. Haggai ii. 6—9. Zech. ix. 9; xii. 10. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14; ix. 24—27. Micah v. 2. Isaiah liii.¹

The due consideration of the many minute circumstances, literally and expressly described so long beforehand; the many improbable and apparently contradictory events respecting Him, which were foretold successively, for nearly four thousand years, connected with their exact accomplishment, as related to us by eye-witnesses who laid down their lives in confirmation of their testimony; and corroborated as that is by the actual state of the world at present; such a consideration is peculiarly calculated to strengthen and establish our faith in Christ.

Especially, when we remember further, that those very prophecies are now in the possession of the Jews—the avowed enemies of Jesus of Nazareth. They thus become unsuspected and unexceptionable librarians, living witnesses testifying to all ages that the predictions have been preserved unaltered. If it be asked how it is that they are not themselves convinced, the answer is sufficient; multitudes were convinced by this very evidence, when the events had taken place, and the hardness of heart of others, and their rejection of Christ, were expressly foretold in the very same writings, and form an actual part of those prophetic records of which they are the depositories.

¹ A full table of the chief prophecies respecting Christ is given by *Mr. Horne* in his Introduction.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING NATIONS AND COUNTRIES
CONNECTED WITH THE JEWS.

As all the prophecies bear on Christ and his Church, whether Jewish or Christian, but little is said about those nations and kingdoms that have no direct concern with the Church. The reason is obvious. The Scriptures were written for the use of those who receive them. Prophecies would be useless to those who have no connection with the Church of Christ, and either reject or are ignorant of the Sacred Writings. Yet the prophecy of Noah, respecting his three sons, (Gen. ix. 25—27.) is an epitome of the history of all nations. The prophecies of Daniel too contain an abridgement of the history of the four great empires that have prevailed in the earth.

These empires are foretold in the second Chapter of Daniel, under the figure of a golden image, and in the seventh chapter under the figure of four wild beasts; representing the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires.¹

¹ A clear and plain illustration of these prophecies will be found in Cuninghame's *Political Destiny of the earth*.

In considering the fulfilment of prophecies respecting Nations connected with the Church we have a most striking evidence of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; an evidence that is obvious to every sincere inquirer, and every candid mind.

For the full proof of this, the reader is referred to the following works:—Bishop Newton's Dissertations, Davison on Prophecy, and Keith on the Evidence of Prophecy.

The prophecies respecting BABYLON are recorded—Isaiah xlii. 14, 45—47. Jer. l. 51: respecting NINEVEH, by Nahum and Zephaniah ii. 13—15: respecting TYRE, Isa. xxiii. Ezek. xxvi. 27, 28. EGYPT, in Ezek. xxix. 30—32. AMMON, Ezek. xxi. 28—32; xxv. 1—7. Jer. xlix. 1—6. EDOM, in Isaiah xxxiv. Jer. xlix. Ezek. xxxv. Obadiah. MOAB, in Jer. xlviii. Ezek. xxv. 8. The PHILISTIANS, Amos i. 6—8. Zephaniah ii. 4—7. Jeremiah xlvii. And the ARABS in Gen. xvi. 10—12.

These prophecies, it is most strengthening to our faith to know, are, from the universal, though often unconscious, testimony of all historians and travellers, Christian or infidel, who have written respecting them, fulfilled, if not wholly, yet in a vast variety of particulars, in the sight of all men at the present hour.

There is a further use and application of these prophecies made by our Lord (compare Isa. xlii. 10. and Matt. xxiv. 29, &c.) and his Apostles, on which Dean Woodhouse makes the following remarks:—

“ Throughout the whole of the prophetic Script-
ure a time of retribution and vengeance on God's
enemies is announced. It is called *the day of the
Lord; the day of wrath and slaughter: of the Lord's
anger, visitation, and judgment; the great day, and the*

last day. At the same time it is to be observed, that this kind of description, and the same expressions which are used to represent this great day, are also employed by the prophets to describe the fall and punishment of particular states and empires; of BABYLON, by Isaiah (chap. iii.) of EGYPT, by Ezekiel (xxx. 2—4; xxxii. 7, 8.) of JERUSALEM, by Jeremiah, Joel, and by our Lord (Matt. xxiv.); and in many of these prophecies the description of the calamity which is to fall on any *particular* state or nation is so blended and intermixed with that general destruction which in the final days of vengeance will invade all the inhabitants of the earth, that the industry and skill of our ablest interpreters have been scarcely equal to separate and assort them. Hence it has been concluded by judicious divines, that these partial prophecies and particular instances of the Divine Vengeance, whose accomplishment we know to have taken place, are presented to us as types, certain tokens, and forerunners of some greater events which are also disclosed in them. To the dreadful time of universal vengeance they all appear to look forward beyond their first and more immediate object. Little indeed can we doubt that such is to be considered one use and application of these prophecies, since we see them thus applied by our Lord and his Apostles." He then refers to Isaiah xiii. 10., and ii. 1—6, 8., and compares it with Rev. vi. 12—17, and states, that though Idumea is mentioned by the prophet as the particular object of vengeance, yet it has a more sublime and future prospect, and in this sense the whole world is its object. Such prophecies "have all of them been typically fulfilled in the fall of those nations whose

after-ruin they prefigured, but a more perfect completion is reserved for them with which their grandeur of design and sublimity of expression more exactly accord, for they seem to unite with the apocalyptic prophecy in pointing ultimately and emphatically to the great day of the Lord's wrath."

CHAPTER V.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE JEWS.

MANY of the prophecies of the Old Testament, as far as they regard the Jews, have already been LITERALLY ACCOMPLISHED. Let us, when we have to consider a prophecy, first inquire after this point, and endeavour to ascertain whether it may not have received a literal accomplishment. The value of such a prophecy still remains. It marks the constant and particular foreknowledge and providence of God, illustrates his dealings with his creatures, and furnishes a most solid evidence of the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The actual accomplishment must, therefore, never be overlooked, especially that which regards the first coming of our Saviour in the flesh among the Jews, and the diffusion of his Gospel among the nations of the earth, through the labours of Apostles selected from the Jewish Church. The first advent of Christ was the greatest event which this lower world has hitherto witnessed, and the confirmation of it affects the faith and happiness of the whole human race: and no wonder, therefore, that it is so much dwelt upon, both in prophecy and in the history of the New Testament, where the fact is confirmed, and

the truth and inspiration of the prophecies are established. In order rightly to interpret other prophecies, we must notice the *time* when they were delivered. There are, generally, express statements, in connection with every particular prophecy, which discover this important circumstance. All the prophets of the Old Testament, except the last three, flourished before the return from the captivity in Babylon. Zechariah and Haggai also prophesied at the time of the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel, and seventy years before the return of a large body under Ezra. It appears, from various expressions, that some of the ten tribes also returned at the same time. Ezra vi. 17—21; viii. 35. The prophecies, therefore, foretelling their return to their own land, received a commencing, though only partial, accomplishment in their return from captivity, yet by no means adequate to the fulness and largeness of varied predictions. Indeed Hosea i. 6—10, plainly points out a marked difference between Israel and Judah.

It is evident that a variety of events may fulfil in a regular series the same prophecy. The first promise of Christ, (Gen. iii. 15.) and the prophecies respecting Noah's sons, shew this. Hence many events in successive ages may be but as parts of one full sense in which a prophecy shall ultimately be fulfilled. Hereby the divine foreknowledge, and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, are in the result most remarkably displayed and illustrated. Thus there may be a growing accomplishment of prophecy through many ages.¹

¹ Lord Bacon's statement on this subject is in the usual style of that great man, who takes original and comprehensive views of *all that he considers*. It occurs in the first section of his Work, "De

Many prophecies respecting the land of Judea have received already a remarkable and literal fulfilment as Mr. Keith has ably shewn in the fifth chapter of his work on prophecy: others remain unaccomplished.

But let us confine our attention more particularly to the expectations which we may justly entertain respecting THE FUTURE STATE OF THE JEWS.

There are many expressions in the Old Testament which may lead us to expect not only the conversion of the Jews, but their NATIONAL RESTORATION FROM THEIR PRESENT DISPERSION to their own land. The late Mr. Scott thus summed up his own views on the subject, in his work on the Restoration of Israel. He says:—

“It is now becoming more and more the opinion of serious Christians, that when Israel shall be converted to their long-rejected Messiah, they will be gathered from their dispersions, and reinstated in their own land; which being rendered as fertile as in times past, (perhaps much more so,) and extended to the utmost limits of the grants made to the Patriarchs, will yield them in rich abundance, all things needful and comfortable for this present life. It is also thought that they will live in this land under

augmentis Scientiarum,” and is as follows:—“The history of prophecy consists of two relatives; the prophecy, and the accomplishment: whence the nature of it requires that every Scripture prophecy be compared with the event, through all the ages of the world, for the better confirmation of the faith, and the better information of the church, with regard to the interpretation of prophecies not yet fulfilled. But here we must allow the latitude which is peculiar and familiar to divine prophecies; which have their completion not only at stated times, but in succession, as participating of the nature of their author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but having a growing accomplishment through many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to a *single age or moment*.”

rulers of their own nation as the vicegerents of the Messiah, of David, or the son of David, in entire peace and security, free from invader or oppressor, and from the fear of any: and that, along with all spiritual blessings in rich abundance, they will be voluntarily regarded by all other nations, then truly converted, with peculiar love, and gratitude, and honour, as the source of all their spiritual blessings, and especially as most nearly related to their common Messiah and Saviour who is the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.”¹

¹ A general idea of the expectations of many students of Prophecy which have been entertained for a lengthened period, may be gathered from a collection of promises concerning the calling of the Jews and the glory which shall be in the latter days: taken from Powel's Concordance, published in 1673. It is referred to by Doddridge in his Lectures on Divinity.

“ I. The Jews shall be gathered from all parts of the earth where they are now scattered, and brought into their own land.

For this see Isai. xi. 11; xxvii. 12, 13; xliii. 5, 6; xlix. 11, 12; lx. 4. Compare Jer. iii. 18; xvi. 14, 15; xxiii. 3; xxx. 10; xxxi. 7, 8, 10; xxxii. 37. So Hos. xi. 10, 11; Zeph. iii. 10; Zec. viii. 7, 8; x. 8, 9, 10.

“ II. They shall be carried by the Gentiles to their place; who shall join themselves with the Jews, and become the Lord's people.

Isai. xlix. 22; xiv. 2; lx. 9; lxvi. 18, 20; and ii. 2, 3, 4. Compare Jer. iii. 17; xvi. 19; Ez. xlvii. 22, 23; Mic. v. 3; Zec. ii. 11; viii. 20.

“ III. Great miracles shall be wrought when Israel is restored as formerly when they were brought out of Egypt—viz.

1. Drying up the river Euphrates. Isai. xi. 15, 16; Zec. x. 11; Rev. xvi. 12; Hos. xi. 15; Mic. vii. 15.

2. Causing rivers to flow in desert places. Isai. xli. 17, 18, 19; xlviii. 20, 21; xliiii. 19, 20.

3. Giving them Prophets. Isai. lxvi. 18, 19, 20, 21; Hos. xii. 9, 10.

4. *The Lord Christ* himself shall appear at the head of them. Isai. xxxv. 8; iii. 12; lviii. 8; Hos. i. 10, 11; Mic. ii. 12, 13.

“ IV. The Jews, being restored, and converted to the faith of Christ, shall be formed into a State, and have Judges and Counsellors over them as formerly: *the Lord Christ* himself being their King, who shall then also be acknowledged King over all the earth.

Isai. i. 26; lx. 17. Compare Jer. xxiii. 4; xxx. 8, 9, 21; Hos. iii. 5; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; xxxvii. 24, 25; Isai. liv. 5; Obad. 21; Zec. xiv. 5, 9; Psalm xxii. 27, 28.

It may be useful to remember, when we are forming an opinion respecting minute particulars of unfulfilled prophecy, that the utmost caution, forbearance, and reverence become us, lest we intrude upon the glories and peculiar attributes of Jehovah, and go a step beyond what he has authorized or revealed.

"V. They shall have the victory over all their enemies, and all kings and nations of the earth shall submit unto them.

For which see Isai. xi. 13, 14; xiv. 1, 2; xli. 14, 15, 16; xlix. 23; lx. 12; xxv. 10, 11, 12; Joel iii. 7, 8, 19, 20; Obad. 17, 18; Mic. iv. 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13; v. 5, 6, 7; vii. 16, 17; Zec. ii. 13; ix. 13, 14, 15, 16; ix. 3, 6; xii. 6; Num. xxiv. 17; Isai. xlix. 23; lx. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; lxvi. 19, 20. -

"VI. The Jews, restored, shall live peaceably, without being divided into two nations, or contending with one another any more.

Isai. xi. 13, 14; xiv. 1, 2; Jer. iii. 18; l. 4; Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 22; Hos. i. 11.

2. They shall be very numerous, and multiply greatly. Isai. xxvii. 6; xlv. 3, 4; xlix. 18, 19, 20, 21; liv. 1, 2, 3; lxi. 9; Jer. xxiii. 3; xxx. 18, 19, 20; xxxi. 27; Ezek. xxxiv. 11; xxxvi. 8, 39.

3. They shall have great peace, safety, and outward temporal prosperity. Isai. xxxii. 16, 17, 18; xxxiii. 24; liv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; lx. 18, 21; Jer. xxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6; xxx. 10; xxxii. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40; xxxiii. 6, 7, 8, 9; l. 19, 20; Joel iii. 17, 18; Mic. vii. 18, 19, 20; Zeph. iii. 13; Zec. iii. 9, 10.

4. They shall be very glorious, and a blessing in the whole earth. Isai. xix. 24, 25; lxi. 9; Jer. xxxiii. 9; Ex. xxxiv. 26; Zeph. iii. 19; Zec. viii. 13.

"VII. The Land of Judea shall be made eminently fruitful, like a Paradise, or the Garden of God.

Isai. xxix. 17; xxxv. 1, 2, 7, 9; li. 3, 16; liv. 11, 12, 13; lv. 12, 13; lx. 17; lxxv. 17, 28; Ez. xxxiv. 26, 27; xxxvi. 36, 37; Joel iii. 18; Amos ix. 13, 14.

"VIII. Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and after the full restoration of the Jews shall never be destroyed, nor infested with enemies any more.

Isai. lii. 1; xxvi. 1; lx. 18, xxxiii. 6; Joel iii. 17; Obad. 17; Zec. xiv. 10, 11; Jer. xxxi. 38, 39, 40; Ezek. xxxviii. 11.

"IX. A little before the time of the Jews' call and conversion, there shall be great wars, confusion, and desolation throughout all the earth.

Isai. xxxiv. throughout; Joel iii. 1, 10; Zeph. iii. 8, 9; Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26; Hag. ii. 21, 22, 23; Jer. xxx. 7, 8, 9, 10; 2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

"So that we may say, as Balaam did, prophecying of that very time: *Alas, who shall live when God doth this!* Num. xxiv. 23."

The result may shew that any interpretations which would refer the main promises concerning the Jews to any state of mere worldly glory and splendour, fall far short of the event, just as their expectations respecting an immediate temporal kingdom of the Messiah were disappointed by that spiritual kingdom which he established, and which is *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

It appears, however, from a careful consideration of the whole series of prophecy in the Old Testament, to be very probable, that several of the prophecies delivered before the captivity, may have even a primary reference to a yet future return of Judah and Israel to their own land.

The expressions in the Old Testament on this point are the most strong. The returns from Babylon, both of Judah and of Israel, were very limited, but especially those of the ten tribes, so as hardly to seem to meet the promises in any literal fulfilment. The expressions in Deut. xxx. 1—6, (following that remarkable prophecy of their dispersion among all nations) naturally lead our minds to a return from their present dispersion to their own land. The declaration, (Isaiah xi. 11.) that *the Lord will again put forth his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people that remaineth, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the sea*, received not, as far as we are

¹ Josephus says, (Book xi. chap. 5.) "The entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country; [where they were carried captive] wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude not to be estimated by numbers."

informed, a full literal accomplishment in the return from Babylon:¹ neither did that recorded in Jeremiah, chap. xxx. and xxxi. where the distinction made between the captivity of Israel and of Judah, (xxx. 3.) leads us to expect the return of Israel,² an event which appears to us yet to be accomplished. The Apostle (Rom. xi. 26.) quotes Isaiah lix. 20, as referring to their future conversion, and thereby justifies our taking such a view of that prophecy, and others of a similar kind. The whole series of chapters, Ezekiel xxxvi. to xxxix. inclusive, with

¹ The situation of Egypt at the present moment cannot but be one of much interest to the Christian; not only from its ruler having now possession of the Holy Land, but also from the peculiarly vigorous, active and enterprising spirit of the pacha and his son, and the powerful army and navy that they have got together, connected as these are with the state of Turkey and Russia; and with the predictions in the latter days respecting Israel, Assyria, and Egypt, (Isaiah xix. 18—25.) Bishop Lowth considers Isaiah xviii. as referring to Egypt. Bishop Horsley and Faber refer it to a maritime country, meaning Great Britain. A little time may more develop these remarkable prophecies.

² In the Quarterly Review of Burne's Travels into Bokhara, the following remarks occur respecting the ten tribes—"It has been for some time past a current opinion in the East, that the offspring of the lost tribes of Israel survive among the Afghans. Mr. Burne after shewing some anachronism in the genealogies, and that there are similar corruptions in those of Greece and Rome, &c. says:—

"The Afghans look like Jews; they say that they are descended from Jews, and the younger brother marries the widow of the elder, according to the law of Moses. The Afghans entertain strong prejudices against the Jewish nation, which would at least shew that they have no desire to claim without a just cause a descent from them. Since some of the tribes of Israel came to the East, why should we not admit that the Afghans are then descendants converted to Mahomedanism. I am aware that I am differing from a high authority (W. Elphinston). [Mr. E. declined the investigation, but thought the accounts of their origin fabulous], but I trust that I have made it to appear on reasonable grounds." Vol. I. page 164.

The Baptist Missionaries Carey and Marshman, quote a learned Afghan as saying, "his nation are Beni Israel, but not Yahood;" sons of Israel, but not Jews; and inform us that in the Pushtoo or Afghan language, there are more Hebrew words than in that of any other India nation.

several other instances, might be added, as prophecies that have yet, as far as we can at present judge, to receive their chief accomplishment.

In the New Testament, though but little is said on this subject, there is nothing to throw doubt upon our hopes respecting the Jews; and two strong passages in oblique hints, however, rather than by positive assertions, confirm this hope. Both proceed from our Lord. One is, *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, Luke xxi. 24. The other is his reply to the inquiry of his disciples, *Wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* Acts i. 6, 7. The book of Revelation, the last discovery given to the Church of future events, says little or nothing on this part of our subject, unless the 7th chapter, and the Kings of the East (Rev. xvi. 12) refer to the Jews; and the songs of praise in chapter xix., include them. The general tendency of what we read in the New Testament is to lead our minds from any temporal kingdom and earthly glory, to that spiritual kingdom which is to be established in every believer's heart, as a preparation for his possessing an heavenly inheritance; but still with this is clearly predicted, in harmony with Old Testament prophecies—a kingdom which shall one day universally prevail,—for a day is coming when it shall be said, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*: and the inheritance of this kingdom is our great reward in the day of Christ, (Mat. xxv. 34; Rev. iii. 21; v. 10.)

Respecting the future CONVERSION of the whole

Jewish nation, as distinct from their national restoration, there can also be no reasonable doubt; the prophecies are sufficiently clear and decisive. *For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward, shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.*

The New Testament does not here speak obscurely. Nevertheless, when it (the Jewish nation) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. 2 Cor. iii. 16. If they have in part now fallen, their fulness shall hereafter come in. Rom. xi. 12. If they are now cast away, they shall be received; (ver. 15.) if they have been broken off, they shall be again grafted in; (ver. 23.) and so all Israel shall be saved, ver. 26. How cheering are such promises; and they are accompanied with the delightful assurance, that their recovery shall be a blessing to the world even as life from the dead.

It is to be feared, that some who are warm friends to missions among the heathens, have not sufficient faith with regard to efforts among the Jews, and think it almost a hopeless undertaking. But is not this directly contrary to the plain argument of the Apostle on this very point;—*They also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree, how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree.* Rom. xi. 23, 24.

The promised future conversion of the Jews, with its effects on the world, should both encourage our

hopes and excite our labours for them. This duty is brought before us in the statement of God's design in their present unbelief—*They have not now believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy, Rom. xi. 31.*

There are other points respecting this subject on which Christians have been more divided, and to which it may be desirable briefly to advert.

THE PRIORITY OF THE GENERAL CONVERSION OF THE JEWS to that of the Gentiles, has been much discussed. They appear to be closely-connected events: if we only considered the vastness of the scene of labour, and the immense work to be accomplished; we should see how easily both may be advancing at the same time, and mutually promoting each other. Very small is at present the real Church of Christ; and the progress hitherto made in the purification of the Church, and the conversion of the world, is very limited. The work is so large that it may advance yet very much more, and quite enough be left, after the conversion of the Jews, to realize the assured hope, that that event shall be *as life from the dead* to the world.

The supposition that the Jews are to be the EMINENTLY SUCCESSFUL MISSIONARIES to the Gentiles, and those for whom the honour of their UNIVERSAL conversion is reserved, appears to the author to have a considerable foundation, both in history and scripture. Undoubtedly the Evangelists sowed the first seeds of Christianity in many kingdoms now nationally professing the Christian faith.—Though the Christian nations were not in general, nor exclusively, probably, in any particular instance, brought to that profession by the means of Jewish Mission-

aries, the effects of the labours of the Apostles, the way in which their writings have been and are blessed, and the fact that all the knowledge of true religion, that is now in the world, comes originally through the Jewish nation, have remarkably commenced the fulfilment of such predictions on this point in the Old Testament, as Isaiah ii. 1—5; Micah v. 7; Zechariah x. 23; and by no means shut out hopes of yet more extended blessings from this people. Indeed, who can but feel a joyful hope when he looks at the whole history of the Jews and their present state, and the promises connected with their conversion?—Who can but rejoice in the blessed anticipation that they will be again, as in the first days of the Church, most effective Missionaries to the Gentiles? See them scattered in every country, knowing almost every tongue, valuing every where their original scriptures, marked as a peculiar people by all nations, and a city set on a hill in every land. Consider yet further, that the New Testament is translated into their beloved original language, circulated among them, and received and read by them. Then look at their restoration, and the cheering promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost—*I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.* Observe them, thus penitent and believing, going back to the lands in which they have sojourned, as witnesses above all exception to the veracity of God; and who can but hope, both from the providence and prophecy of God, that such marvellous events, as they must attract the attention of the whole earth, so they will be a spiritual

blessing beyond calculation to every nation, and that the converted Jews shall most effectively aid the general conversion of the gentiles.

Yet it becomes us to speak of unfulfilled prophecy with reserve and humility; while the general result is clear, the particular mode of accomplishment is left in obscurity for the most important practical purposes—the exercise of faith, and hope, and humility. Let us then be satisfied with general views, without being anxious to understand or state the exact mode in which God will accomplish his purposes and explain the various minute particulars connected with them; about which, after all, we may entirely mistake, for we are not prophets, and should not speak as if we were. While we search the prophets diligently, let us be willing to suspend our judgment concerning such deep subjects as the various particulars of God's purposes, till it shall please him to make them manifest by the event. Surely there is much wisdom in the saying of one of the Fathers—*melius est dubitare de occultis quam litigare de incertis*.

Having given these general remarks, we need not pursue the subject much further as to particular prophecies respecting the Jews in the Old Testament yet unfulfilled.

The following rules have been given to assist in ascertaining whether prophecies respecting the Jews are yet to be fulfilled. 1. When Judea and Israel are both included in the promised blessings, as Isaiah xi. 12;—2. When permanent blessings are promised to them, as Ezekiel xxxix. 29;—3. When the time for the fulfilment is designated by the latter days, as in Hosea iii. 5;—4. When they are ac-

accompanied by predictions of universal peace, as in Isaiah xi.¹

We would not enter into a particular examination of these rules which would lead to a lengthened discussion; but only observe generally, that it should ever be duly considered whether the prophecies which would come under them may not have received their designed accomplishment as it regards the Jews,—be now in a course of accomplishment,—or be hereafter accomplished in a higher and more important sense. The term *for ever*, annexed to promises, does not necessarily imply perpetuity. The statutes and ordinances of the Jews were said to be *for ever*, (Exod. xii. 17; xxxi. 16.) when they were only given while that dispensation lasted.

Two or three instances may illustrate the subject. In Isa. ii. 1—5, there is a promise of the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, by the going forth of the law out of Zion. That it was in some degree fulfilled in the apostolic times will be generally

¹ The Rev. John Scott has, in his Treatise on the Destiny of Israel, given rules more definitely expressed, and in the author's view more unexceptionable. He says,

"With respect to many particular prophecies, the great point to be made out is, that they refer to the present dispersion, and to a restoration which is still to take place; and not merely to events connected with the Babylonish captivity. Now four ways have occurred to my mind in which I think this may be satisfactorily proved, concerning a variety of passages. Such must be the case (*first*) whenever the prophecy was delivered after the restoration from Babylon: (*secondly*) whenever the order and series of the prophecy refer us for its accomplishment to times subsequent to the Messiah: (*thirdly*) whenever the restoration of Israel (by which term I mean the ten tribes) is unequivocally (I say unequivocally, for the mere use of the name of Israel is by no means sufficient to shew that the ten tribes as distinct from Judah are intended) promised, no such restoration having ever yet taken place: or, (*lastly*) whenever the language is such as can with no propriety be considered as fulfilled in the recovery from Babylon."

admitted; and we would not deny that a fuller literal accomplishment may yet take place. In like manner, Isa. lx. 1—5, began its course of accomplishment on the day of Pentecost, and will, in the fulness of time, through the converted Jews,¹ be more abundantly literally fulfilled, and all be realised. The prophecy of Zechariah, (viii. 23.) that *ten men should take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew*, was remarkably accomplished in the preaching of the word by the Apostles, though we would not preclude a further accomplishment hereafter.

For a particular explanation of the various prophecies, the reader is referred to the writings of those who have deeply studied this subject; especially Mede, Bishop Newton, Woodhouse, Cuninghame, &c. Scott's Answer to Rabbi Crooll contains also much information. Expectations of a mere earthly kingdom, and worldly splendour and glory, seem inconsistent with our Saviour's declaration, *My kingdom is not of this world*; but this declaration must be taken in connection with those which shew that a universal kingdom of Christ shall be established on the ruins of all others, Daniel ii. 44; vii. 27, and Rev. xi. 15. The special blessings which Christ bestows on his people, in his kingdom, are holy, spiritual, and heavenly.

¹ Archbishop Leighton, in a sermon on Isaiah lx. 1, applies the text to the whole Church of Christ, yet thus speaks of it with reference to the Jews—"Undoubtedly the people of the Jews shall once more be commanded to arise and shine, and their return shall be the riches of the Gentiles, and that shall be a more glorious time than ever the Church of Christ did yet behold. Nor is there any inconvenience if we think that the high expressions of this prophecy have some spiritual reference to that time, since the great doctor of the Gentiles applies some words of the former chapter to that purpose. (Rom. xi. 29.) They forget a main point of the Church's glory, who pray not dally for the conversion of the Jews."

The whole history of the Jewish Church foretold and illustrated by prophecy, presents many a striking lesson. It shews us the sovereign, righteous, and merciful government of Jehovah : the fatal consequences of unbelief ; the infinite importance of knowing the day of salvation, and rightly improving our spiritual privileges. It holds forth many an affecting illustration of the wisdom and power, the forbearance and loving-kindness, the justice and compassion, of the great Lord of all.

CHAPTER VI.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THERE are many PROPHECIES THAT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED in the state of the Christian Church since the coming of Christ, and that are now manifestly fulfilling. We may refer to Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, in proof of this. A considerable part of the book of Revelation has, in this way been made sufficiently clear by the event.

The statements given by St. Paul respecting a falling away of the Christian Church, are very striking. He tells the Thessalonians, (second Epistle, chap. ii. verses 3, 4.) that the last day should not come *except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.* All history shews how exactly this, with the following part of the description (verses 6—12.) marks the Pope of Rome, arrogating the title of His Holiness, claiming infallibility, dispensing absolution, restraining the Scriptures, exalting his own decrees above

them, usurping a right to depose kings, and the like. The same falling away is described again, (1 Tim. iv. 1.) *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.* The apostacy of the Roman Catholic Church is here again distinctly marked—their multitude of mediators—worship of saints—legends, and pretended miracles—the celibacy of their Clergy—and the numerous fastings from particular meats, are clearly foretold.¹

Now these very predictions are in the keeping of the Roman Catholics. They, like the Jews, are unexceptionable librarians of the prophecy. And if it be asked, why they do not renounce popery, we have the very same reason to give as we had respecting the Jews; thousands and tens of thousands, and millions and tens of millions, when the Holy Scriptures were fully laid before men at the reformation, on this very ground forsook the Roman Church; and the perseverance in corruption of the rest, till the entire destruction of this fallen Church

¹ Some modern writings on prophecy, which tend to overthrow the whole system of interpretation in the Protestant Church, lead me to remark, that God having promised a blessing on the study of the prophetic word; and many, after lengthened study, having for centuries come to the conclusion, that the Man of sin describes the Pope, and Babylon, Papal Rome, it is in the highest degree improbable that this interpretation should be erroneous. Whatever farther fulfilment may take place in the close of this mystery of iniquity, and in its final destruction, the past fulfilment has been such as to satisfy the general body of Protestants that this is a true interpretation: indeed Cressener, in his 'Demonstration of the Apocalypse,' has shewn that Roman Catholic writers themselves furnish many testimonies that help this Protestant application of the prophecy. See farther remarks on this subject in following Chapters.

is foretold in the very same writings which predict its fall from primitive purity.

There are similar prophecies respecting the *Mahomedans* given in the books of Daniel, chap. viii. 9—25, and Revelations, chap. ix. which have also been remarkably fulfilled.

In considering THE FUTURE STATE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, let us first look at the peculiar design of God in directing the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. The Gospel was to be preached to every creature, and the promise was added, *he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved*; and the threatening annexed, *he that believeth not shall be damned*. Though God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, yet it does not appear by the Scriptures or by facts, that he purposed by the preaching of the Gospel to save all men. Matt. xxvi. 14. The most extended preaching of the Gospel is the hour of God's judgment, Rev. xiv. 6. St. Paul leads us to this idea, that through the fall of the Jews, salvation came to the Gentiles; that the Gentiles by unbelief, high-mindedness, and a discontinuance in his goodness may be cut off; and that the natural branches shall be grafted into their own native olive tree, Rom. xi. 11. 20—24. St. James gives us the same view of the design of the Gospel, (Acts xv. 14); God's graciously visiting the Gentiles TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE TO HIS NAME; and then building again the tabernacle of David, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles. Our Lord says to his disciples; *ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world*, John xv. 19. There are, as we have seen, clear predictions of a falling away in

the Christian Church (1 Tim. iv. 1—3 ; Dan. vii. 25.) and this falling away in the sight of all men, has largely taken place. JUDGMENTS also on the professing Church of Christ are clearly foretold. The falling away is connected with awful consequent judgments (Dan. ii. 44 ; vii. 9—11, 26 ; 2 Thess. ii. 8—12) which we dare not overlook in considering the future state of the Christian Church.

From all these things we may gather, that the present dispensation of the Gospel, till the Jews are restored, was not designed for the universal conversion of the whole Gentile world ; but to gather a Church out of the Gentiles ;¹ it is after the punishment of God's enemies, that his glorious kingdom is to be fully established.

In considering the punishment of those enemies, we may first notice that the destruction of Popery is an event clearly predicted. *The mystery of iniquity doth already work : only he who now letteth (or hinders), will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming,* 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8. The voice shall yet be heard, *Babylon the great is fallen*, Rev. xviii. 1. The pouring out of the vials, Rev. xvi. is probably already in progress, and the fall of the Mystical Babylon must follow. May God's people every where obey their Saviour's direction, *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*, Rev. xviii. 4. The destruction of the imposture of Mahomet is equally clear ; *he shall be*

¹ The Author refers with satisfaction to Mr. M'Neil's Sermon on the times of the Gentiles, as conclusive to his own mind.

*broken without hand, Dan. viii. 25. The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, Rev. xvi. 12. The prediction is plain, And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, Rev. xix. 20.*¹

A continuance of the servants of Christ intermingled with the ungodly till the end, and then a separation, and the punishment of the ungodly is also clearly foretold and well does it become us diligently to search the Scriptures respecting this separation. (See Mat. xiii. 36—52; xxv. Luke xvii. 20—37, and various other passages.) We have been accustomed simply to refer such expressions to the general judgment at the close of the Millennium, but there is no intimation in any of these passages of a Millennium, and there are expressions in them that seem inconsistent with the idea of an intervening millennium of universal righteousness.

That glorious millennial kingdom follows the coming of Christ to punish his enemies, whatever that coming be, and here is the blessed hope of the believer.

The Christian, though now surrounded with difficulties, and with a probability of a temporary increase of those difficulties, may yet lift up his head full of expectation and hope. His Saviour is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.* The agitations of the present time should only lead him to those views

¹ The application of the Prophecies to Popery is noticed in a subsequent Chapter.

and feelings which David so beautifully expresses in the 46th Psalm, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* Whatever may be the precise and exact meaning of the promises, the general result is clear; the full triumph of Christ over all his enemies. How rich are the promises! *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; the kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him; Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and the Saints be priests of God, and of Christ, and reign with him a thousand years:* our hopes cannot but be raised by these and multitudes of similar promises, to a far happier scene than this lower world has ever yet witnessed—a scene which must now be fast approaching.

In what aspect then shall we regard those blessed exertions which are now making by religious societies, and which fill the heart with hope and joy? Let us mark first the extent and success of those exertions.

Unquestionably we live in a remarkable day of the Church of Christ. There is a peculiar shaking of the nations and larger efforts are making by faithful Christians to diffuse the Gospel, and the word of God has been circulated to a greater extent, than in any former era of Christianity.

The success in modern missionary exertions has been indeed supposed by some to be inadequate to the means used, and the expectations reasonably excited by them; and it has been thought that the cause of this, has been the neglect of the Jews as the

great medium for the conversion of the world. But is not the supposed fact itself really unfounded? Looking at the miraculous gifts of the primitive Church, and especially that of tongues, and looking at the large outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we need not be surprised that the Gospel spread then as it did. National conversions however did not then take place in a few years. The Christian Church was, during the whole of the first three centuries, more or less persecuted and despised, and consisted of individual Churches. A person at first sight may be apt to suppose, that, when the Apostle wrote the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, the whole of Rome and Corinth were Christians: but it need not be proved that this was far indeed from being the case. Though it is freely allowed that the Gospel then spread with a rapidity unexampled in any age since; yet we apprehend that the reason for this, in subordination to the divine will, must be looked for, not in the neglect of employing men of any particular nation, but in the sins of Christians; in their lukewarmness and coldness; in the want of a missionary spirit in the Church at large; and especially in the want of a general and enlarged spirit of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; in the small extent to which the doctrine of Christ crucified has been preached; and in the defect of a spirit of union and love among real Christians.

Passing by Roman Catholic Missions, as not needing here distinct consideration, it may justly be said that the success which has been already given to efforts to spread the Gospel, is larger than some seem to think; especially when we consider the *few instruments* employed, the *short space of time*

in which they have laboured, and the difficulties which they have had to encounter, before they could simply and fully declare to the Heathen, in their own tongue, *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. It was long in general after the formation of their Societies, before the Missionaries went forth to their work, and long after they landed, before they could preach to the natives. There are even now very few *European* or *American* Missionaries preaching to the Heathen in their native tongues; probably the number but a few years since fell short of the seventy disciples whom our Lord sent forth, and most of these even could not, from the very necessity of the case, speak with the ease and fluency of a native; many of them spoke with that broken and foreign accent, and those hesitating expressions, which necessarily greatly hindered the power of their statements.

And notwithstanding all difficulties, the Gospel has spread, and is spreading, more extensively every year: thousands and tens of thousands are converts and communicants: and all these things are doubtless preparing the way for the Church's full glory. Look at the effects of the labours of Swartz and others. They began in great discouragement; and now there are, as the result of those labours, upwards of twenty thousand Native Protestant Christians in South India. Look at the state of the Colony of Sierra Leone, where the Author witnessed the negroes in the greatest degradation, as naked savages and miserable Idolaters, and of whom a competent and unexceptionable witness, a few years afterwards, said, that their spirit and conduct were such that he was persuaded there was not to be seen upon earth a community of equal size so truly exemplary. Look at

thousands of Christian Negroes in the West Indies blessed by the Gospel, imparted in modern times through the labours of the Wesleyan and Moravian Missionaries. Look again at the South Sea Islands emerging from the lowest barbarism and idolatry to piety and civilization, through the persevering efforts of Christian Missionaries in our own day. Every where, in proportion as the Gospel of Christ has been fully and faithfully preached, it has been *the power of God to the salvation of the heathen*.

The promise then still abides faithful. *My word—that goeth forth of my mouth—shall not return unto me void*; and the extent to which that word is going forth, concurs with the cheering light of prophecy to strengthen our hopes, that however dark the clouds now, and however severe the storm, that we previously expect, may be, the dawn of the millennial day of glory cannot be far distant.

But we are not left in doubt as to the aspect in which all this is to be viewed. In the 14th of Revelation, we have a prediction of three angels going forth with distinct voices. The first angel flies *in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters*. The second angel declares the fall of Babylon, and the third angel the wrath of God on all who worship the beast and his image. Here we see predicted the diffusion of the Gospel, and it is followed, apparently, by a time of great trial to *the Church*, v. 12, 13. Dr. Cressener in some able

discussions in this part of the Chapter, endeavours to shew that *the time of the patience of the saints* is the fiercest persecution of the true Church by the beast, betwixt the preaching of the everlasting gospel and the last destruction of the beast, and the same with the time of the overcoming and killing of the two witnesses, ch. xi. v. 7. Immediately after this, is the coming of the Son of man on the cloud, and the reaping of the harvest, or the gathering of God's saints (Mark iv. 26, 29. Matt. xiii. 24, 30; xxiv. 31. John iv. 35—38.) and then the treading of the vintage, or the punishment of his enemies, Rev. xix., and Isa. lxiii. 1—6. The exertions of Religious Societies shew that the first angel, preparatory to the coming of Christ, with his warning voice, has already taken his flight: the other angels will follow, and then the Son of man appears in the clouds to establish his glorious kingdom, Dan. vii. 13, 14.

Mr. Cuninghame on Rev. xiv. 14, observes, "It is plain that the vision does not belong to the first moment of the Advent, for that is described by the one like the Son of man coming in the cloud, (Dan. vii. 13. Matt. xxiv. 30.) here on the contrary, John sees him sitting on a cloud, which implies not the action of coming, but that he is already present." On this he makes this just reflection, "The moment of our Lord's first approach is, in this fourteenth chapter, as every where else, sedulously concealed from us. How unspeakably awful and awakening is this thought."

We must contemplate and meditate upon the future glory of the Church, as revealed in the prophetic pages of Scripture. The study of this, though

yet unfulfilled, is not to be neglected, for it is connected with important practical duties. *Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, and he began to seek the Lord by prayer and supplication with fasting.* The first Christians, warned by the prophetic intimations of our Lord, fled from Jerusalem, and escaped the tremendous visitations which came upon its inhabitants: and so there are still duties connected with the expected fulfilment of future prophecies. *Behold, I come quickly! Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

We cannot indeed fix any precise time as to *when* future events are to happen. There are several important periods specifically named in scripture, and especially the great æra of 1260 prophetic days or years, and these will be noticed afterwards, yet we cannot tell, till events have declared it, *when* that æra commenced. The whole chain of prophecy manifestly leads us to expect that we are on the verge of remarkable events. Even if it be admitted that the 1260 years have not closed, (as it is thought that they did in 1792,¹) and will not come to an end for some years, they must obviously be hastening to their close. But a short period can then elapse before the coming of Christ for the general establishment of Christ's kingdom. Daniel intimates two further brief periods of thirty and forty-five years; and then says, *Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.* The servants of Christ then may well lift up their

¹ See Mr. Cooper's "Crisis." Whatever may be the difference of opinion on his prophetic views, all Christians must feel the practical and holy tendency of this work.

heads, enlarge the preparatory work, and anticipate, first indeed, intervening trials and awakening judgments on his enemies, and then happier and more prosperous times than the Church has ever yet enjoyed. There is enough of clear prediction to animate us to the most strenuous and self-denying exertions for the conversion of Jew and Gentile, the one cause of our Lord and Saviour Christ.

But do not the most wise and judicious Christians differ much in their view of these things? It must indeed be confessed that it is so. Yet in practical results there is a great agreement. Though real Christians differ, in some respects about the order in which the latter-day glory of the Church shall be brought on, and, in some particulars, as to the means by which it shall be accomplished: there is no difference on practical points. There is no question but that the preaching of the Gospel, whether by the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, or the faithful ministry of devoted Missionaries, is a great and divinely appointed duty. There is no doubt but the larger outpouring of the Holy Ghost in his sanctifying influence is absolutely necessary. There is no obscurity in the truth that it is our duty to seek the conversion of the whole world, whether Jewish or Gentile. There is one general expectation, by all who believe God's word, of the full triumph of our Lord Christ, however they may differ as to the way in which God will bring it to pass. The duty is plain and admitted by each intelligent Christian, the encouragements are great and felt by all, and all difficulties in the way of establishing Christ's kingdom, however to be removed, shall all ultimately be surmounted. *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked*

shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

There is one great event, the future coming of Christ, predicted in the Scriptures, which has an all-important bearing on the hopes of the Church; yet the precise nature and the time of that coming, and its influence on the conversion of nations, and the blessedness of our earth, is, in a great degree, involved in the obscurity of unfulfilled prophecy. Let not this, however, be any impediment to active exertion in the cause of Christ. The views of the Apostolical writers were remarkably vivid and distinct respecting the coming of Christ. It is perpetually brought forward by them, and we may see that in their lives and labours, it was attended with a most practical and holy influence. None were more devoted in their efforts to spread the Gospel. Those therefore must be grievously mistaken who rest in the speculative part of this subject, and on whom it has the effect of hampering and crippling exertions to promote the advancement of his spiritual kingdom. Whatever be our views of the coming of Christ, as it is an infinitely desirable æra for the Church, and there are events previously to take place in the accomplishing of the number of God's elect, well may we labour by means of Religious Societies thus to "hasten the coming of his kingdom." If he be speedily coming, surely we should desire to be found among those labouring to make the day of grace known before it be too late, 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2, and hastening the coming of the day of God, 2 Peter iii. 12.

But we will consider this subject more fully in a following Chapter,

CHAPTER VII.

CHRONOLOGICAL PROPHECIES.

CHRONOLOGICAL Prophecies have an important use. Though they may not be designed to enable us absolutely to fix the precise time in which such prophecies shall be accomplished, yet they are manifestly intended to guide the Church in looking out and preparing for, the event predicted. It was thus that Daniel, in the first year of the reign of Darius, understood the accomplishment of the 70 years captivity, (Dan. ix.) and thus the devout Jews were waiting for the first coming of Christ. Luke ii. 25, 38.

It would be a grievous error in the Church to disregard such prophecies. Because many in past ages have made serious mistakes respecting the dates, we must not, therefore, in the spirit of infidelity, refuse to consider them, as if they were full of danger and evil. The mistakes of others should lead us to more caution, and diligence, and prayer, in our researches, and more diffidence in our conclusions. But having now the advantage of a more lengthened manifestation of God's mind, from the past history

of the Church, we have with this, greater light for the true interpretation.

Because men, hundreds of years back, said, the coming of Christ was near to them, do not let us now say it cannot be near to us. The rolling away of 1800 years must have brought it much nearer. Because they anticipated the event before the time, do not think it will not come suddenly, and cannot be at the doors, and that it is not your duty to look for it and expect it.

O unhappy perversion of preceding mistakes ! by which Satan gains this immense advantage ; that wise and holy, that cautious and good men are brought into a state either of neglect of that word of prophecy which is a light shining in a dark place till the day dawn, and to which GOD HAS EXPRESSLY COMMANDED US TO TAKE HEED ; or of hampering it with such rules as almost to shut out the study from the general body of the Church. O deep design of Satan ! by which he accomplishes that predicted dangerous state of men in general, before the day of the Lord come : *as a snare shall it come on ALL them that dwell on the face of the WHOLE earth : When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth.* Let us not be ignorant of his devices.

The first prophetic period brought before us in the Scriptures, is 120 years, (Gen. vi. 3.) when *once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah ;* (1 Peter iii. 20,) the more affecting to us in these last days, as the world then was, in general unbelief and worldliness, in a similar state to that in which it is to be before the coming of Christ (Luke xvii. 26, 27. Matt. xxiv. 37—39.) Boothroyd's translation of the passage in Genesis is striking, *Jehovah said,*

my Spirit shall never pronounce judgment on men unwarned. They are but flesh. Their days therefore shall yet be 120 years.

Many of the predictions of Scripture have a mark of time attached to them in which they were to be fulfilled. Such are the 430 and 400 years of the Israelites being in Egypt, (Gen. xv. 3. Exod. xii. 40.) The 65 years predicted by Isaiah, in which Israel was to be broken, (Isa. vii. 9.) The 70 years of Judah's captivity, (Jer. xxix. 10.) The 70 weeks, or 490 years, in which Messiah was to be cut off, (Dan. ix. 24, 25.) The 2300 days or years, at the end of which the sanctuary is to be cleansed and no longer trodden under foot, (Dan. viii. 13.) The period of 1260 days or years, of the dominion of the papal power, predicted under the varied terms of time, and times, and half a time, (Dan. vii. 27. Rev. xii. 14); 42 months, (Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 5.) or 1260 days, (Rev. xi. 3, and xii. 6); the farther periods of 30 days and 45 days, included in the 1290 and 1235 days or years, (Dan. xii. 11, 12.)¹

The mystical period of an hour, a day, a month,

¹The Author has read with some care the objections that have been made, as far as he has had opportunity of seeing them, to the interpretation which would make a prophetic day to signify a year, especially those of Mr. Maitland and the late Bishop Horsley; but he sees yet no decisive objection to hinder his abiding by the long maintained exposition of the chief Protestant Expositors of Prophecy, and of both Jewish and Christian Writers, that in the prophecies, the time of the fulfilment of which was not intended to be made clear to those to whom they were delivered—a day means a year; though he thinks it possible that there may be a concentrated farther fulfilment at the close of the times of the Gentiles, according to the general expectation of the Fathers. There are many sufficient reasons why a mystical number should be used. He refers to the writings of Mede, More, Faber, Holmes, Cuninghame, and others for the proof of this view. The time of the commencement of the æra is more hidden in obscurity.

and a year, generally considered as 391 years and a month, has had several different dates assigned for its commencement; this period is reckoned by Mr. Habershon from the capture of Constantinople, when artillery was used (Rev. ix. 17.) with such success by Mahummud II. in 1453; the termination of the Turkish woe would thus be brought down to 1844.

Chronological Prophecies are of great and growing importance. A few hints will be given respecting that called by our Lord, THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES. On this Mr. Mede says, "I make no question but these *times of the Gentiles*, (Luke xxi. 24.) with which the Jews' tribulation shall end, are either the times of the four monarchies in general (that is the times of that prophesied dominion of the Gentiles); or, which is all one in event, those last times of the fourth kingdom, of *a time, times, and half a time*, at the fulfilling whereof Daniel prophecies of the same appearing and coming of the son of man in the clouds of heaven, (Dan. vii. 13, 25.) as St. Luke does in Luke xxi. 27."¹

The period of a time, Mede has shewn, signifies a year, and times two years, and half a time half a year. The Jewish year consisting of 360 days; three years and a half make 1260 days. A large body of Christian interpreters, with Mede and those who follow him, consider the prophetical day to intend a year—and view 1260 days as 1260 years.

But three prophetical years and a half are but the half of the whole Jewish dispersion. There is a remarkable prediction of their troubles for their sins in Lev. xxvi., in which they are told again and again (see

¹ See Mede, 753.

ver. 18, 21, 24, 28), that they shall be chastened *seven times* for their sins. The frequent repetition of seven times connected with their lengthened suffering under the Gentile monarchies, seems to point out a special design and to intimate the length of time which these chastisements should last. It would make, interpreted as we do the times in Daniel, a period of 2520 years, from their being carried into captivity. This period would terminate earlier or later according as we reckoned the commencement of the captivity of Israel or of Judah. If we reckon the captivity of Israel as commencing in 727 before Christ, Israel's first captivity under Salmanezer, it would terminate in 1793 when the French Revolution broke out: and if 677 before Christ, their captivity under Esarhaddon (the same period when Manasseh, king of Judah, was carried into captivity, 2 Kings xvii. 23, 24. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11,) it would terminate in 1843: or, if reckoned from 602 before Christ, which was the final dethronement of Jehoiakim by Nebuchadnezzar, it would terminate in 1918. All these periods may have a reference to corresponding events at their termination, and are worthy of serious attention.¹

The whole of this period of 2520 years, as it regards those countries with which the Church of God has been connected, has been marked by the prevalence of four empires. Mr. Mede in his *Apostacy of the latter times* has remarked. "For the true account of times in the Scripture we must have recourse to that SACRED CALENDAR AND GREAT ALMANACK OF PROPHECY, the four Kingdoms of Daniel, which are

¹ See Habershon on the Prophecies, for many valuable observations on this subject.

a prophetic Chronology of times measured by the succession of four principal Kingdoms, from the beginning of the captivity of Israel, until the mystery of God should be finished, a course of time during which the Church and nation of the Jews, together with those whom by reason of their unbelief in Christ, God should surrogate in their room, was to remain under bondage of the Gentiles and oppression of Gentilism; but those times once finished, all the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and to the great Calendar of Times, together with that other but lesser calendar of seventy weeks, all mention of times in the Scripture, seems to have reference." A Jewish Rabbi, Saadiah Gaon, in the tenth century stated, on Dan. vii. 18. "Because Israel had rebelled against the Lord, their kingdom shall be taken from them and given to these four monarchies, which shall possess the kingdom in this age, and shall lead captive and subdue Israel to themselves in this age, until the future age when Messiah shall reign." See Mede's Works, p. 536.

The four Kingdoms are—

1. *Babylonian*, Dan. ii. 32, 38.
2. *Medes and Persians*, Dan. ii. 39; v. 26—28.
3. *Grecian*, Dan. viii. 20, 21.
4. *Roman*, John xi. 48; xix. 15.

It might at first sight be supposed that the ten kingdoms should be formed out of the whole Roman Empire, both eastern and western. The reason why it is not so, is thus stated by Sir I. Newton in his remarks on the prediction of Dan. vii. 11, 12. *The rest of the beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives were preserved.* "The four beasts are still alive

though the dominion of the three first be taken away. The nations of Chaldea and Assyria are still the first beast. Those of India and Persia are still the second beast, those of Macedon, Greece and Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, are still the third, and those of Europe on this side Greece, are still the fourth. Seeing therefore the body of the third beast is confined to the nations on this side the river Euphrates, and the body of the fourth beast is confined to the nations on this side of Greece, we are to look for all the four heads of the third beast among the nations on this side of the river Euphrates, and for all the eleven horns of the fourth beast, among the nations on this side of Greece. And therefore at the breaking of the Greek Empire into four kingdoms of the Greeks, we include no part of the Chaldeans, Medes and Persians in those kingdoms, because they belonged to the bodies of the two first beasts. Nor do we reckon the Greek empire seated at Constantinople, among the horns of the fourth beast because it belonged to the body of the third."

In the raising up of Greece to a distinct kingdom in our day, we may now see in Turkey, Persia, Greece, and the ten European kingdoms, all these empires in existence.

The inquiry then comes what are these ten kingdoms? Dr. Cressener has observed that "the number *ten* is usually taken in Scripture for an uncertain multitude of those things of which it is said to be the number; and in such a long succession and change of kingdoms as it is here joined with, and where there is no other circumstance to shew it to be a definite number, it ought in all reason to be taken in that sense; that is for an uncertain multitude of

kingdoms that were to be set up with the beast in the bounds of the Roman Empire."¹

It is singular, however, that Machiavel, a professed member of the church of Rome has given a list of the Gothic tribes which overthrew the Roman empire in the fourth and fifth century, making them ten in number. It is painful also to us, of this long favoured land, to find that Britain is included in almost every list of the chief interpreters of Revelation, (as Mede, Lloyd, Sir I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Hales, Cuninghame, &c.) among these ten kingdoms.²

The following are considered by some as the ten kingdoms as they now subsist. 1. Ravenna. 2. Lombardy. 3. Rome. 4. Naples. 5. Sardinia. 6. France. 7. Austria. 8. Spain. 9. Portugal. 10.

¹ See Cressener's Demonstration of the Apocalypse, page 244.

² Prophetical writers have differed in opinion whether Britain be included among the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire. From the expressions—*They receive power as Kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast*; it has been concluded that as Britain, before the rise of Popery, was separated from the Roman Empire, and did not become papal at the beginning of Popery, and separated from it at the Reformation, it cannot be among the ten kingdoms. See the Christian Guardian for 1830, p. 135, and Witherby, p. 79 to 88. Rejoiced, indeed, would a British Christian patriot be to see his country not included in the last judgments on the Roman Empire. (Dan. ii. 35; vii. 11.) But it has seemed to some interpreters of Revelation, that there are changes in the Roman Empire revealed under the terms Dragon and beast; Rome Pagan, ch. xii. Rome Papal, ch. xlii., and a third in chapter xvii., which may be called Rome Papal, Infidel, Republican. The differences of the beasts of ch. xiii. and xvii. are distinctly pointed out by Woodhouse, p. 359, and 360. It is in the last form that the ten kingdoms *have one mind with the beast*, and are cast into perdition, and no time is allotted for the duration of this beast. If it be so, what an argument is here furnished for contending with Papacy, and Infidelity, and Democracy, special evils of the last days! See Mr. Cuninghame's remarks on the last form of the Roman Empire, in his Dissertation, p. 446 and 493. The state of our country cannot but occasion much anxiety. When Lord Stanley, so likely from his previous situation to know the truth, stated the present, (January 12, 1835,) as a "period which he

Britain; but on this list, as might be expected, there are different opinions—some being left out and others added, and if ten be not a definite number, this need not surprise us. The symbolising and uniting with Popery and its issue infidelity, is the darkest mark for any nation which has once been a part of the Western Roman Empire.

The importance of chronological prophecies will be more clearly seen when it is known that these ten kingdoms are to be destroyed at the coming of Christ, (Dan. ii. 44, 45.) and that it is during their continuance that he appears in the clouds to establish his own kingdom on their ruin, (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14,) his being the sole kingdom then left, (Dan. vii. 27, 28; Rev. xi. 15.)

The termination of the times of the Gentiles is also the more important as it is so continually represented to us as the time of the separation of the wicked from faithful professors. Look in this view at the Parables of the tares and wheat; the net cast into the sea, the ten virgins and the talents. See the striking statements of our Lord, Luke xvii. 26—30, and of his Apostles, 1 Thess. iv. 15—18; v. 1—11. 2 Thess. i. 5—10 and ii.

The author was long satisfied to refer these to the general judgment after the millennium, but a more full consideration of scripture leads him to think

considered to be a crisis of fear, of anxiety, and of danger," and when Lord Grey in a letter to Lord Ebrington, had previously stated the serious difficulties of governing the country, and the importance of not being "urged by a constant and active pressure from without to the adoption of measures, the necessity of which had not been fully proved," and in the present feverish state of the public mind, who can be without fears for his country.

that the whole of the scriptural testimony can only be harmonised by applying them to a separation to take place previous to the Millennium.

When shall these things take place? Who can answer this? the precise time is hidden from us; but *the signs of the times* are to be discerned, and the approach of the time may be expected to be known, as was the time of the first advent to Simeon, Anna, and others.

On the COMMENCEMENT OF THE 1260 YEARS, there are considerable differences of opinion among Protestant interpreters. The most common modern opinion (that of Mr. Cuninghame, Mr. Frere, and Mr. Irving,) is 533; the date of Justinian's supposed Edict in favour of the Pope; Mr. Faber's commencement is 604; Bishop Newton's 727; and Lowman 756.

The most probable of these periods seems to be the year 533, ending in the French Revolution; but it tends to shake this, that there is some reason to think that parts of Justinian's Letter in favour of the Pope are a forgery of the Romanists. The author's attention was first directed to this by a notice in the Investigator, vol. iii. p. 263, stating that Comber in his *Forgeries of the Councils*, p. 251, declares the whole to be a forgery. As the work of Comber (the enlarged edition, containing the third and fourth parts of his works published in 1695,) is very scarce, the passage is subjoined.¹

¹ "The next is an epistle of Justinian to this Pope, wherein the Emperor is pretended to declare his Faith was conformable in all things to the Roman Church, and made to say, *he had subjected and united all the churches of the East to the Pope, who is the head of all the holy churches*—with much more stuff of this kind. This letter is refuted by the learned *Hottoman*, and many other very great lawyers, who *Baronius* calls a company of *Heretics and Petty Foggers*, but confutes

In the part which Comber admits to be genuine there is much respect and honour given to the Pope, but not what could of itself be considered putting the saints into his hands. I am unable to investigate the matter farther, but it seemed right not to withhold this suspicion thrown upon Justinian's Decree.

There are other expressions in Justinian's Novels, making the Pope pre-eminent, to which Comber has not alluded, (Nov. 131. ch. 2.) "Sanctimus sanctissimum senioris Romæ Papam PRIMUM ESSE OMNIUM SACERDOTUM." See Mr. Cuninghame's able state-

their arguments with false reasoning and Forgeries, as I shall shew when I come to note his errors: I shall now confine myself to prove the greatest part of this epistle to be spurious: for who can imagine *Justinian* (who vindicated the authority of his Patriarch at *Constantinople* as equal with *Rome*, and by an authentic Law declares that the Church of Constantinople is the *Head of all other Churches*, yea, in the genuine part of this epistle calls his Patriarch *the Pope's Brother*;) that he, I say, should here profess he had subjected all the Eastern churches to *Rome*? And how should he (that differed from *Pope Hormisdas* in his decision of the question, *whether one Person of the Trinity suffered for us*; and made *Pope John* now yield to his opinion, and condemn his Predecessor's notion,) declare he submitted his Faith in all things to the Pope? But we need no conjectures, for if the Reader look a little farther among the epistles of *Agapetus*, he will see one of the boldest impostures that ever was; for there *Justinian* himself writes, *verbatim*, the Epistle which he had writ to *Pope John*, and whatever is more in this letter set out among *John's* epistles than there is in that which is owned by the Emperor is an impudent Forgery, added by some false Corrupter to serve the Roman Supremacy: now, by comparing these two Epistles, it appears, *the beginning and end "of both are the same, and may be genuine*: but in neither part is there one word of his subjection, or the universal Supremacy: and all that wretched jargon comes in where it is corrupted, viz. *From Ideoque omnes Sacerdotes universi orientalis tractus et subdicere—till you come to these words—Petimus ergo vestrum paternum—*which, when the Reader hath well noted, he will admire that those who had the cunning to corrupt a Prince's Letter by adding twice as much to it as he writ, should be so silly to print the true letter within a few pages: but, doubtless, God infatuates such corrupters, and the Devil owes a shame to Lyers."

ment on this subject, with the original extracts, in his Apocalypse, p. 260—273, and his reply to Mr. Faber, p. 27, &c. The passage in Daniel, on which the commencement of the 1260 years is chiefly founded, is thus translated by Wintle, *He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall presume to alter appointed seasons and the law which shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the division of a time.* On which Mr. Wintle says, “ Either the saints shall be subject to his power, or as seems more agreeable to the versions, his influence shall prevail over the solemnities of the law. Possibly both might be intended to be included in the usurpation.”

The Author has not seen his way so clearly on the commencement of the 1260 years, as to give an opinion with confidence upon it; though it justly calls for attentive consideration, he doubts not that it will be given to the Church to see it with greater clearness than it has yet done, if 533, or any of the dates hitherto fixed be the real one.

From whatever dates we reckon, we cannot but consider that the time of the end is drawing near, and that awful events of judgment and of mercy are before us. The time of condemnation and salvation as concerns the professing Christian Church at large, as well as each individual believer, is hastening on. This should lead every Christian on his own part to special watchfulness; on the part of a perishing world to the utmost exertions and prayer; and on the part of the Church and the world to come, to peculiar hope and gladness of heart; when these evil times are passed away, the day of millennial glory dawns on the

world, (2 Pet. i. 19) ; or in the words of St. Paul, speaking of the loving kindness of God, in choosing his people out of the world, God's purpose is *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.* Ephesians i. 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON ANTICHRIST.

ANTICHRIST means an opposer of Christ. The name in the Scriptures occurs only in the writings of St. John. He says, *It is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. And again, Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is in the world.* 1 John ii. 18, 22. iv. 3. Again in his second epistle he says, *Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist.*

Mede applies these predictions (fixing the date of the Epistle previous to the destruction of Jerusalem) to those who should come in the name of Christ, saying, *I am Christ*, and the false prophets who rose

before the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv. 5, 11), and says, John thence gathered that it was the last times of the Jewish polity. He supposes him first to refer to Simon Magus as the first heretic, and then to Menander, Saturnius, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus,¹ &c. understanding by the name of Antichrist, not merely a single man, but an heretic faction; and many false prophets. "But," Mede says, "though I have thought that John, in these places, speaks of false prophets who corrupted the doctrine of Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem, yet may also that little sum of the doctrine of Antichrist, by which it is denied that Jesus is the Christ, be accommodated to that great Antichrist, who having substituted his saints as little Christs to be worshipped, by that denies that Jesus is the Christ, as they who worship many gods, deny that Jehovah is God. Even from this Epistle (v. 21.) something like this may be collected, for when he had said of Jesus Christ, *this is the true God and eternal life*, he immediately adds, *little children keep yourselves from Idols*, intimating a fatal future afterwards, that Christians should worship idols in the place of Christ, that is, false Christs and Saints as Mediators."

It will be observed that our Lord, at a later period of his discourse respecting his coming, says, *there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.*

May not the name Antichrist be viewed then, rather as a general name descriptive of the oppo-

¹ Sir I. Newton takes the same view. See his Observations, p. 256.

nents of Christ, than in reference to a particular individual?

There has been much discussion, whether the name Antichrist be justly ascribed to Popery; and whether the Man of Sin, (2 Thess. ii.) be also rightly ascribed to Popery. After some study and reflection, the author is disposed to think that the great corruption of Christianity in Popery, has in its whole spirit the distinguishing marks of an apostacy, and is properly called Antichrist. It was the general sentiment of the Fathers, that *what withholdeth*, (2 Thess. ii. 6.) referred to the restraining power of the then Roman Dominion,¹ and when that was removed, Antichrist would be revealed, and this removal clearly made way for the establishment of Papal usurpations. *The mystery of iniquity* worked in the days of the Apostles, so that St. John says, *even now there are many Antichrists*. Looking at the whole tendency of Popery, and seeing how it is adapted in every part to set aside the Father in his love, and the Son in all his mediation, grace, and offices (1 John ii. 18, 22,) the name Antichristian seems most scripturally to be given to that apostacy. Thus the Apostle calls, (2 John vii.) many deceivers, *ὁ ἀντιχριστός*, the Antichrist, and so justifies the description of the name, to many and successive individuals. The Reformer, Bernard Gilpin, thus argued (assuming Babylon and Antichrist to be the same), "If the Pope be Antichrist, I see not only probable, but even necessary causes to depart from the Popish

¹ See Tertullian, Chrysostom, Jerome, &c. There are valuable notes on this subject in Fulkes Testament, on 2 Thess. ii. Cyprian calls all heretics "the precursors of that one and special Antichrist which is to come at the last end of the world."

Church. But if the Pope be not Antichrist, I see no sufficient ground for such a departure. It is not lawful to make a separation from the Church. But we are not only enjoined to come out of the Church of Antichrist, but we see the fearful anger of the living God, and hear his dreadful threats thundered out against those who shall remain in Babylon, that Synagogue of Antichrist, Rev. xvii.¹

The early Fathers of the Church held generally (but not universally, for even Irenæus thought the true name of the beast might be Lateinos, or the Latin Kingdom), that there would be a personal Antichrist, born of a Jew, to be developed shortly before the second coming of Christ, and to be destroyed in Judea.

It is rather, however, a matter of interest and curiosity, than of weight and authority, to know the sentiments of the Fathers on the nature of Antichrist; as they lived before history could have developed the main principles of popery, they had not historical illustrations to guide them; and we as Protestants receive no traditions as decisive authority for the interpretation of the word of God.²

Yet, as the reader may like to see a few extracts containing some of their sentiments; they are here given.

JUSTIN MARTYR, in his Dialogue with Trypho, referring to Micah iv. 1, &c. speaks of those as "destitute of just reason who did not understand that which is clear from all the Scriptures, that two comings of Christ are announced. One in which

¹ Bishop Carleton's Life.

² See Dailhé's, Whitby's, and Barbeyrac's Works on the Fathers as Interpreters of Scriptures.

a suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified Saviour is to be preached; but another in which he shall come with glory from the heavens, when also the man of apostacy, speaking great words in the earth against the highest, will dare to do wicked things against us Christians, who, since we have known the way of worshipping God by the law and the doctrine going forth through the Apostles of Jesus, from Jerusalem, fly to the God of Jacob.”¹

Fulke quotes TERTULLIAN as saying, on 2 Thess. ii. 6, “Who shall be taken away, but the Roman state, whose departing, being dispersed into ten kings, shall bring in Antichrist,” of which Fulke goes on to say, “By ten, according to the custom of the Scripture, are meant many, and so was there many kingdoms made of the Roman Empire, before the Pope openly usurped Antichristian tyranny.” IRENÆUS (in his 5th book against Heresies, ch. 30.) says, “When Antichrist, reigning three years and six months, shall have laid waste all things in this world, and have sat in the temple of Jerusalem, then shall the Lord come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of His Father, casting him, and those that obey him, into the lake of fire; but procuring, or bringing with him, unto the just, the times of the kingdom; that is a rest, the seventh day, sanctified and restoring to Abraham, the promise of the inheritance, in which kingdom, says the Lord, ‘Many shall come from the East and from the West, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’”

¹ Bishop Kay speaks of Justin Martyr as viewing the appearance of the Man of Sin as immediately connected with the second coming of Christ in glory, and his appearance as the prelude of severe persecutions against Christians.—See Bp. Kay's Justin Martyr, p. 103.

The opinions of JEROME may be gathered from his Commentaries. He applies for instance such expressions in the Psalms, as Psalm ix. 19, thus, "The voice of the Church sounds against Antichrist, rise to judgment, let not man prevail, that is the man, Antichrist, the sinner." He continues the same application to Psalm x. In a similar manner he applies Daniel xi. to Antichrist; and in Daniel vii. he speaks of the little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel thus,—“Therefore let us say what all the Ecclesiastical writers have delivered, that at the end of the world, when the kingdom of the Romans is to be destroyed, there will be ten Kings, who will divide the Roman world among themselves, and an eleventh will arise a little King, who will overcome three kings of the ten Kings; that is the King of the Egyptians, and of Africa, and of Ethiopia; as we may say, will be more manifest in what follows: Who being slain, the other seven Kings will submit their necks to the conqueror. *And behold, he says, in this horn were eyes, like the eyes of a man.* Let us not suppose him, according to the opinion of some, either to be a Devil or a Demon, but one of the human race, in whom all Satan shall dwell bodily, *and a mouth speaking great things*, for he is *the man of sin, the son of perdition*, so that he dares to sit in the temple of God, making himself to be as God.”¹

¹ The reader may like to see his statement in his own words: “Ergo dicamus quod omnes Scriptores Ecclesiastici tradiderunt; in consummatione mundi, quando regnum destruendum est Romanorum, decem futuros reges, qui orbem Romanum inter se dividant, et undecimum surrecturum esse, regem parvulum, qui tres reges, de decem regibus superaturus sit: id est Egyptiorum regem, et Aphricæ, et Æthiopie: sicut in consequentibus manifestids dicemus. Quibus interfectis etiam septem alii reges, victori colla-

Jerome afterwards applies that passage, Daniel vii. 13, to the personal coming of Christ, connecting it with Acts i. 11.

Jerome's views of the ten kings, and the three kings, are what might have been expected from one living as he did in the 4th century, before the division of the Western, or proper Roman Empire into the European kingdoms. What is called a king in the 17th verse, is called a kingdom in the 23rd. There appears, then, sufficient reason for thinking the ten kings to mean ten kingdoms.

Mede applies the prediction of the little horn, Daniel vii. 8, 11, 20, 21, 25, to the Papal Antichrist, comparing it with the description of the Beast, Rev. xii. 14; and xiii. 5, 6, 7. He thence judges that the horn of Daniel's Beast is altogether the same as the Antichrist of John, in the Revelation. And since both were to endure to the perfecting of the kingdom of Christ, he gathers, that the Roman kingdom, of which the last part is Antichrist, is the fourth kingdom of Daniel.

In his Treatise on 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, &c. on the apostasy of the latter times, Mede discusses, at length, the application of that prophecy to Papal Rome, as the Antichrist of the last times, and shows how completely and exactly it applies to Popery.

It will have been seen how generally the Fathers, as indeed almost the whole church of Christ, have identified the Man of Sin, of 2 Thessalonians ii. 2, with Antichrist.

submittent. *Et ecce ait oculi quasi oculi hominis erant in cornu isto. Ne eum putemus juxta quorundam opinionem vel diabolum esse, vel dæmonem, sed unum de hominibus, in quo totus Satanas habitaturus sit Corporaliter. Et os loquens ingentia. Est enim homo peccati," &c.*
2 Thess. ii.

The Predictions respecting the Assyrian, frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, not having been fully realized in the history of the Assyrian of old, have led many to think that there is a further reference to the Antichrist of the last days, in his history. (See Isaiah xiv. 25.) Vitringa has a lengthened discussion on this application of the Old Testament prophecies, in his Commentary on this passage. See also Lowth, Bishop Lowth, Horsley, and Fry.

Cocceius, in his Treatise on Antichrist, discusses the following passages, as applicable to this subject. 2 Thessalonians ii; Matt. xxiv; Daniel xi; Isaiah xiv. 13, 14; Ezekiel xxviii. 23; Rev. xii. 13, 14, 17. Daniel vii. and 1 John i.

It will be clear, from the expressions of St. John, *Ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come*, (1 John ii. 18.) that the name refers to an opposition to Christ, which had been previously foretold; and hence the ancients generally connected various prophecies in the Psalms, in Daniel, and in St. Paul's Epistles, as well as in the Revelation, with Antichrist. But the application of any particular Prophecy, which is, or has been supposed to be, descriptive of POPERY, to that apostacy, must rest on the just interpretation of that prophecy, and its connection with other prophecies, and not on the verbal term Antichrist, which occurs only in the epistles of St. John. The words of St. John, describing antichrist, are so general, as to lead us to give the name to whatever opposes Christ: and especially may we apply it to the system of Popery which has perverted the Gospel of Christ for so long a period, virtually subverts his main doctrines, and sets aside his offices

as Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, while it professes to hold them. Satan is here especially *transformed into an Angel of light*, supplants the truth by lies, and corrupts by flatteries, and does by consequence deny the only God and Father.

It has been noticed already, that some modern writers of prophecy (whose powers of mind, established piety, and acuteness of remark, are such as to entitle their works to consideration,) have endeavoured to set aside the protestant application of the Man of Sin to Popery, and Babylon to Papal Rome. The Author has read some of these works, he hopes not without edification, from their practical character; nor without increase of caution in the views which he holds, but with no conviction that they have overturned the great mass of argument by which the Protestant Church had established that application. When we consider how explicitly our God has begun and closed, (Rev. i. 3; xxii. 7.) the book of Revelation with a blessing, promised to those who read and hear the words of that prophecy, it is surely improbable that the general result to which Protestant writers have, for several centuries, with a great unanimity, come, should be erroneous. The expressions of the Apostle, (twice also repeated, Rev. i. 1. xxii. 6.) lead us to think, that what he foretold would begin *shortly to come to pass*. God greatly honoured this view as a mighty means of confirming the Reformers, supporting them at the stake, and thereby extending the blessed Reformation. Cressener (in his valuable works) has shown that Roman Catholic writers themselves furnish many testimonies strengthening the Protestant application of leading parts of these Prophecies to Rome. As it is very

improbable that the church should be left to struggle through eighteen centuries of conflict, darkness and sorrow, without such a lamp as the Revelation giving a light on its path, (yet allowedly a feeble light, shining in a dark place, 2 Peter i. 19) so, in point of fact, devoted Christians, from age to age, during those centuries, have found great support and comfort from the rays of light which this book shed on their course.

It is, however, an advantage to be led to reconsider the ground on which the Protestant interpretation rests, and fresh light will be thrown, not only on fulfilled, but also on unfulfilled prophecy. In this view the works of such writers may be eminently useful. But whatever farther fulfilments may take place in the close of this mystery of iniquity, and in its final destruction, the past fulfilment, in several leading particulars, has been such as to satisfy a large body of the Reformed Church of Christ.

And let not the Reformist, nor the Infidel, glory over Protestants, in their divisions of sentiment. What truth is there that occasions not divisions, and the word of God, under the teaching of the Spirit, is the guide, and the only infallible guide to that truth. What sentiment does the Romanist hold peculiar to his creed, on which there have not been divisions in his Church; what human science is the infidel acquainted with, respecting which there are not varied opinions. Nor let the Bible Christian be discouraged by these divisions; every doctrine which we hold, from the debasing fall of man, to the glorious mystery of the Trinity, has occasioned almost endless discussion and differences: but the truth is worth struggling for through all these difficulties, in

patient meditation upon the scriptures, in fervent prayer, and in diligent study of the works of those who love the truth, wherever it is to be found. A Christian will be thankful to any one who will help him to discover *the truth of God*. And let him not be easily shaken out of the truth, when he has once got it; *Buy the truth and sell it not.* Prov. xxiii. 23.

The grounds on which the Protestant Church have come to its conclusion have been so often discussed, and are so ably stated by those who have discussed it, that it is vain to attempt to go over the reasons again, for this application; especially where there is nothing fresh to offer, after what has been said by Reformers generally, and the varied writers of the Protestant Church, who take this view, such as Mede

¹ May the Author be forgiven for the following practical remarks. Greatly is it to be desired, that in all the discussions between Christian Brethren, on the very difficult subject of unfulfilled prophecy, not only that any sarcasms, severe reflections, and bitter retorts, but that any thing like self-complacent satisfaction in our own views, fancied superior discernment, and greater skill in argument, and all undervaluing the sentiments of others, should be avoided. The absence of the expressions of Christian humility and love, even where real love is not absent, is painful.

Though the author differs from the conclusion, yet Mr. Biddulph has practically and beautifully shown, how much better it is to give, when differing from others, our sentiments, with the mildness and gentleness of Christian love. He offers his thoughts to us in the way of suggestion, rather than of positive assertion. Let not earnest contention for our own interpretation of prophecy, in our own spirit, be mistaken for *contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. It is easier, however, to see what is wrong in others than to avoid it ourselves; and where a system that has cost us years of lengthened study and patient investigation to work out, and has commended itself to many, is opposed by new views, with much plausibility and acuteness, it must be peculiarly trying to our Christian graces, in answering the objections, to answer them with the *meekness and gentleness of Christ*. May our God give this spirit more and more to writers and readers, *with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.*

More, Cressener, Bishop Newton, Hurd, Halifax, Cuninghame, &c. Mede's remark may govern us here: "Though I can reasonably well persuade myself of many things I believe, yet had I never so much confidence in me, as to be able to persuade another man of a contrary judgment, if he were once studied and settled therein; which made me so unwilling at the first to enter the lists with you in this kind, where I could expect no other fruit, but the loss of much time and pains to no purpose. The wit of man is able, where it is persuaded, to find shifts and answers, until the day of doom, as appears in so differing opinions held amongst Christians, with so much endless pertinacity on both sides. It is sufficient, therefore, for a man to propound his opinion with the strongest evidence and arguments he can, and so leave it. Truth will be justified of her children. But these reciprocations of discourse in writing, wherein you place so much benefit for discovery of truth, I have often heard, and seen truth lost thereby, but seldom or never found."¹

In the *British Magazine* there are some letters of Bishop Horsley, striking, from his bold, and forcible, style, rather than conclusive from the weight of his arguments. He inveighs against Mede's interpretation, and calls it "an unwarrantable, monstrous supposition that Christian Rome is Antichrist." The very term Antichrist may be delusive, as being a general rather than a particular term; but that Rome is the Man of Sin and Babylon of Revelation, has, I still think, been proved by the writers above named. The history of Popery has been such as to show

¹ See Mede's Works, page 748, 749.

that the very spirit of Antichrist was, in a series of ages remarkably developed in its system; and this has been proved at very length by Protestant writers of every age since Reformation.

The Author, however, sees no decisive objection to the opinion entertained by some, that there yet take place a heading up, as it were, of the phencies in these last days; a concentrated and binned exhibition of this apostacy, of short continuance in a more glaring and blasphemous defiance of God, and possibly under some personal individual, accompanied with bitter sufferings of the church, but he agrees with Irenæus, that "it is more expedient to wait the fulfilment of the prophecy, than to guess at it." And whether there be any farther exhibition of Antichrist or not, the very uncertainty leads us still to be in the posture of looking and waiting for our Lord's coming.

In the mean while our duties are perfectly clear, to come out of the Antichrist already exhibited, whether in its more open manifestations of Paganism and of infidelity; or in its more subtle workings, *a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* The spirit of Antichrist is in the natural heart of all men, and we are all opposed to entire self-renunciation, and dependence on the righteousness and strength of our Divine Redeemer, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, and hearty confidence and devotion in the love of our Heavenly Father, and devotedness to him, and it is dislike to these things that is the root of Antichrist: we have therefore within our own hearts the very seeds of Antichrist.

May we also be prepared for whatever assault

temptations may yet come upon the church, in these last days, so as to be faithful to our Divine Lord. May we pray much for grace to *stand fast in the Lord*—a direction given by the Apostle in immediate connection with looking for the Saviour, (Phil. iii. 20, 21; iv. 1.)

The final destruction of Antichrist, and of all opponents of the Lord Christ at his coming, is the burden of many a prophecy through the sacred volume, and his total ruin is made palpably clear, in the Apostolic statement, *Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming*, (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD CHRIST.

THE coming of Christ to be the Saviour of the world has ever been the hope of the Church. A Saviour to come was its hope for 4000 years before he personally appeared on earth; and after he had lived and died *and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, a similar hope of his return was set before the Church, as its great subject of expectation, in that explicit declaration of the angels, recorded Acts i. 11, *this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*. This was the great hope of the primitive Church, and it is gratifying to see that this hope is revived in our day, especially when we remember the promise that *unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation*.

The last words of our Saviour and the last prayer of his Church recorded in the scriptures, bear directly on this point, *he which testifieth these things saith surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus*. Our blessed Master here seems, before he leaves us, to turn and look back once more with infinite tenderness on his Church, conflicting here below, in order to give to his people the parting assurance to sup-

port and encourage them amid every trial and difficulty, *Surely I come quickly*; and the Church, then, turning as it ever should, a gracious promise into a fervent prayer, re-echoes the sound, *Amen, Even so come, Lord Jesus.*

The whole history of the Church of Christ had been testified in the preceding book of the Revelation. The sum of that testimony however was to declare, the final overthrow of all the enemies of Christ, the full triumph of his kingdom at the last, the general judgment of all mankind; the everlasting misery of the wicked, and the complete and eternal happiness of his saints.

The coming of Christ has been viewed, either as it relates generally to his accomplishment of these things, or more particularly with reference to his personal and final coming to save his people and judge the world. It is this last which is eminently *his appearing the second time without sin unto salvation.*

There is indeed a *providential* coming, such as his coming to destroy Jerusalem,¹ or coming to an indivi-

¹ There are some expressions on the coming of Christ which not only Anti-Millennarians, but Mede also, with others who take his views, have applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, such as John xxi. 22, James v. 7—9, Heb. x. 37.—(See Mede's Works, p. 704.) Without decidedly objecting to such an application, which completely meets the conceits of Baronius and the sneers of Gibbon, let it be remembered that whatever might be the private opinion even of the apostles who expected a speedy establishment of Christ's kingdom in their own days, (Acts i. 6.) and were left in ignorance of the real time of his return, the expressions of the Divine Spirit, while they are infallibly true, are also adapted to that largeness of view which marks the eternity of God, (2 Peter iii. 8,) comprehends the whole of his Dispensations, and suits his revealed word to the wants of his Church in every age. In this view the passages in James and Hebrews may refer only to this second coming; the term *παρουσία*, James v. 7, 8, signifying personal presence.

dual at the hour of death. There is also a *spiritual* coming, John xiv. 18, 23, as was the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and revivals of religion in any particular period. The context of the passage, or the circumstances of the writer will sufficiently point these out, and distinguish them from his final coming.

The event to which the New Testament mainly refers is his *personal coming*. An event unspeakably terrible to his enemies and infinitely desirable to his people; they are described as *looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*.

The references to this event in the Epistle to the Thessalonians are very frequent, and the practical uses made of it are very diversified. It seems from the expression of St. Paul to the Corinthians, *ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*; as if waiting for this coming was the posture of mind in which it was peculiarly desirable that the Christian should ever be found.

And if we consider that the glory of God in the scheme of redemption will not be fully displayed, nor the happiness of the Church completed till that event takes place, we may easily conceive how desirable that event is.

The Church of England teaches her members, in the Funeral Service, to pray that "God would shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten the coming of his kingdom," and this leads us to one blessed result of Christ's coming. The Church is a corporate body—that is, it is one body, and will not be completed till all the members of that body are gathered together. Nor will each

individual member of that Church be fully glorified till his own body is raised in glory and re-united to his spirit along with the whole Church. The admission of the spirits of the just at death into paradise, is a joyful and desirable event; but we leave many beloved members of the Church on earth, and the whole body of the Church is also incomplete till the resurrection. Admission into paradise at death is then only a step onward to a yet more desirable event—the coming of the Lord when the whole Church will be assembled, the bodies of the saints raised in glory and all his people will ever be with the Lord. Death is *gain* to a believer, it is among his privileges; but it is the resurrection at the coming of Christ that completes his happiness with that of the Church of Christ at large.

The great points of controversy among Christians are not with reference to the actual and personal coming of Christ—all who believe the Bible, believe that he will thus come, for ever to bless his servants and punish his enemies. The question is rather when this second coming shall take place¹—previously to the Millennium, through the Millennium, or subsequently to it; or, as some believe, without any Millennium on earth. The Author after lengthened consideration of the subject, believes that our Lord will come before the Millennium;² but he de-

¹ Mr. Faber's view of a spiritual instead of a personal advent before the Millennium, is well met by Mr. Cuninghame in his critical examination of Mr. Faber's work, page 118, &c. See also Mr. Cuninghame's answer to the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, and his reply to Dr. Wardlaw, and also his præmillennial Advent. At least, let one of the ablest advocates of the præmillennial personal advent be heard, before the doctrine be condemned, lest unconsciously men be found fighting against the truth.

² See his work on "Preparedness for the day of Christ."

sires to view the subject more in the practical application than in minute anticipated declaration of future events. There are, however, difficulties in every theoretical view that have not yet been cleared up; but there is no difficulty at all in the general truth and in its practical application.

On the second coming of Christ, the Scriptures speak both fully and distinctly.

Our Lord himself tells us *the Son of man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him, and then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations.* Of this coming the Apostle says, (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) *The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

The world in general mock at this, and say, *where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* The apostle calls such scoffers, *walking in their own lusts, and ignorant of God's former dealings in the destruction of the world by the deluge, and says, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* He then adds the practical improvement of such immensely important events, saying *Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the*

coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, nevertheless we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless, and account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation. 2 Peter iii. 3—14. It is very affecting to consider that even professing servants of Christ, it is foretold, shall say, *my Lord delayeth his coming.* May we be kept from so great a snare of the enemy!

It is evident that this event is one of stupendous, overwhelming, and incalculable importance, and, if it be to come before the Millennium, it may be near at hand, and we ought to be prepared for it. It is considered to be before the Millennium, because (1) there seems no adequate reason why the word coming, (*παρουσία*) signifying personal presence, (1 Cor. xvi. 17, 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7; Phil. i. 26,) should not mean personal presence in the various passages where it refers to our Lord's coming; (as Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 9; 2 Peter i. 16; 1 John ii. 28.) (2) The man of sin, it is generally admitted, shall be destroyed before the Millennium, and that is stated (Dan. vii. 11—13; 2 Thess. ii. 8,) to be at the coming (*παρουσία*) of the Lord, a coming previously described in terms that identify it with his personal coming. (1 Thess. and 2 Thess. ii. 1.) (3) The numerous expressions of the surprize with which this coming will take the world, as a snare and as a thief, its comparison with the deluge and the destruction of Sodom, and the directions to be

ever looking for it, and the ground on which that direction is given, our ignorance of the day and hour when he comes, seem inconsistent with the idea of any certain intervening period of 1000 years.

(4) The express assertion of our Lord during the pouring out of the sixth vial, (which has been almost generally referred to the decay of the Turkish Empire,) *Behold, I come as a thief*—connected as it is with all those passages which thus speak of his personal coming, leads us to the same conclusion.

(5) A spiritual advent has already taken place, and is already given to the Church, (Matt. xxviii. 20; John xiv. 18, 23,) it seems therefore groundless to apply these passages to what already exists; our Lord is to come again in the same way he ascended on the clouds. (Acts i. 11.)

(6) We read, Psalm cx. 1, *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*, our Lord will therefore remain there till that period; that is, as explained by Daniel, till *the ancient of days sit in judgment on the beast* (Dan. vii. 9—14,) and then he comes with the clouds of heaven to receive his kingdom: His coming thus is after his ascension, and before his kingdom.

(7) We read (Acts iii. 19—21,) *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when (ὅπως, so that, Rose's Parkhurst, see Hosea v. 15,) the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which (of which times) God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.* It is evident that "the times of refreshing," and "the restitution of all things" are to begin with the

sending of Jesus Christ. (8) It is in the time of infidelity spreading itself over the earth, (without any statement of an intervening Millennium,) that our Lord comes: *When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth.* (Luke xviii. 8.) He is revealed when men are full of earthly mindedness, Luke xvii. 26—30, his coming therefore cannot be a spiritual coming of gradually increasing holiness. (9) *Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled!* then follows *the distress of nations*, and *the Son of man coming in a cloud*, and with these things *the drawing nigh of redemption*, Luke xxi. 24—28, whether we apply this to Israel's redemption (Isaiah li. 11; lxiii. 4,) or the redemption of the saints, (Rom. viii. 19—23,) it is *the kingdom of God nigh at hand*, (Luke xxi. 31,) the personal coming of Christ before the Millennium.

When Christ says, *surely I come*, he, who is eminently the truth, and whose word, though *heaven and earth pass away, shall not pass away*, strongly intimates the general disregard and unbelief of man. This accords with his saying, *when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* In few things is our practical unbelief more evident than in the great disregard of this in all our calculations. Men of the world altogether put this out of consideration. They scheme and plan for generation upon generation here, but they plan not with reference to this overwhelming, approaching, and most certain event, which shall controul every human scheme; set aside for ever all that God forbids, and introduce another era for the human race.

The coming of Christ is the leading subject of the Prophecies, both of the Old and the New Testament,

either as it relates to his first or his second coming, and these are often intimately connected together especially in the Old Testament. It may be useful, however, to subjoin a summary of some principal passages which chiefly relate to his second coming, intermingled indeed with predictions of his first coming, but with larger events and promises, than have ever yet been realized.

The passages in which it is expressly treated are such as Psalms l. lxxii. xcvi. to cii.; Isaiah ii. xi. xxiv. to xxviii. and the xl. and remaining chapters. Jeremiah xxx. to xxxiii.; Ezekiel xxxvi. to the end. Daniel ii. vii. viii. xii.; Haggai ii.; Zechariah xii. to xiv.; Matt. xiii. xxiv. xxv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xii. 31, &c. xvii. 20. xxi.; John xiv. 3; 1 Thess. iv. v.; 2 Thess. i. ii.; 1 Cor. xv.; 1 Tim. vi. 13, &c. 2 Tim. iv. 1—8; Romans viii. 18, &c. xi. Jude; 2 Peter; Revelation generally.¹

¹ The following Summary (partly taken from a tract on the subject) may also assist the Reader in referring to passages relating to the coming of our Lord.

From whence does he come?

From heaven. Acts i. 10, 11; Acts iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 16.

How will he come?

In splendour and glory. Mark xiv. 62; Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64; xvi. 27.

Suddenly, when he is not expected.

As a thief. Matt. xxiv. 43, 44; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. xvi. 15.

As a snare. Luke xxi. 34, 35; Rev. iii. 3.

As the lightning. Luke xvii. 24; Matt. xxiv. 27.

As the flood. Matt. xxiv. 37, 39; Luke xvii. 26.

As the destruction of Sodom. Luke xvii. 28, 30.

For what purpose will he come?

To destroy his enemies. Psalm ii. 9; cx. 5—7; Isaiah lxiii. 6; Mal. iii. 5; iv. 1; 2 Thess. i. 7—10; ii. 8; Jude 14, 15; Rev. xix. 11—15.

To raise the sleeping dust of his saints. Job xix. 25, 26; 1 Cor. xx. 22, 23; 1 Thess. v. 14.

This is a RAPIDLY APPROACHING EVENT; *I come quickly* is an expression repeated four times in the last chapter of the Revelation. Quickly indeed did our Lord begin to accomplish that which he had testified, and rapidly is the course of events advancing along. Nothing can stop the progress of him who is thus described in the very beginning of this book,—

To change and glorify the living saints. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 John iii. 2.

To bring mercies to Israel. Rom. ii. 26; Isaiah xi. 11, 12; Dan. xii. 1; Psalm cii. 16.

To judge the earth. Jude 14, 15; Psalm xcvi. 13; Rev. xix. 11.

To take possession of it, and reign over it with his saints. Psalm ii. 8; viii. 5, 6; cxlix. 5—9; Isaiah xxiv. 23; Dan. vii. 13, 14, 18, 22, 27; Zech. xiv. 9; Luke xxii. 29, 30; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; iv. 8; Rev. ii. 26, 27; iii. 21; v. 10; xx. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

When will he come?

During the shaking of the powers of heaven. Luke xxi. 25—28; Matt. xxiv. 29, 30; Mark xiii. 24—26.

In a time of peace. Matt. xxi. 37—42; Luke xvii. 26—30; xxi. 34—36; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.

Soon after the pouring out of the 6th Vial. Rev. xvi. 15.

When unfaithful servants say in their hearts, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” 2 Peter iii. 3, 4; Jude 14, 15, 18.

When the Everlasting Gospel shall be diffusing over the earth. Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

When judgments shall have been poured on the 4th Empire. Daniel vii. 9—13.

When the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke xxi. 24—27; Acts xv. 14—16; Rom. xi. 25, 26.

What is our duty with reference to his coming?

Watchfulness. Mark xii. 37; Matt. xxiv. 43.

Prayer. Mark xiii. 33; Luke xxi. 36.

Waiting. 2 Thess. iii. 5; 1 Cor. i. 7.

Expectation. Titus ii. 13; Phil. iii. 20.

Preparation. Luke xii. 35, 36, 40; Matt. xxiv. 44.

To gain oil in our vessels. Matt. xxv. 1—13.

To lay out our Talents for our Master. Matt. xxv. 14—30, Luke xix. 12—27.

To be thoughtful for his afflicted people. Matt. xxv. 31—46.

To have on the wedding garment. Matt. xxii. 11.

Mr. Fry's Work on the second Advent is designed purposely to bring the prophecies together on this subject, and to illustrate them.

he went forth conquering and to conquer. Sooner perhaps than his enemies suspect, or his friends anticipate, will he subdue all things unto himself. Any delay that may seem to take place is owing to his infinite compassion. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* It will come unexpectedly, sooner than the wicked think; soon, in comparison of eternity, and therefore quickly to all.

If this difficulty be felt; the promises of coming quickly were made to the Church nearly eighteen centuries since, and how could it be true in their case, that he should come quickly, when it is clear that his coming must have been thus distant. We may reply, the whole of the case is not before us. For instance, we do not know enough of the state of departed spirits to ground a real difficulty on this point. We know that they are with Christ, and happy in him, but we know not how periods, long to us, may be rapidly passed through by a disembodied spirit; nor thus how short the interval between their death, and the resurrection of their bodies may really be to them. As the mind, in the sleep of the body, will swiftly retrace past and distant events, so swiftly may this interval pass to the spirit separated from the body. The Eternal Spirit also speaks according to the vastness of his own mind. (2 Pet. iii. 8.)

The practical inference that we may most profitably gather from this apparent delay of this great event is rather this: if they had to expect his coming quickly, surely much more should we who are so obviously much nearer the time. The Apostle says, *only a few years after the resurrection of Christ, now*

is our salvation nearer than when we believed: the night is far spent, the day is at hand; surely then in these days, after seeing the events which the Church has witnessed, accomplishing so many of the prophecies of Revelation; —after seeing the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, so large a portion, if not the whole, of the 1260 years; after seeing the pouring out of the vials, (Rev. xvi.) and the wasting of the Papal and Mahomedan Anti-Christ, and the stir among the Jews; the infidelity that is so widely diffused and so openly avowed; and all the agitating events of the present day, thickening as they are upon us,—every Christian has seen enough to say, I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved, and to listen to the admonition, the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

No Christian can tell *the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh*; and on this very ground every one is called to watchfulness and prayer, and to be like one *waiting for the return of his Lord*. Nor can any arrive at a distinct assurance that Christ will not come to judge the world this century, this year, or immediately. If it be thought that previously to his coming, there shall be a millennium, or thousand years of blessedness on earth, it must be remembered, without weakening the hope of the full triumph of his kingdom, that this is a question of unfulfilled prophecy, on the interpretation of which, the wisest and the best of men have differed; some thinking there will be such a millennium, and some thinking that there will not; and others thinking that Christ

will come before that millennium, and others at the end of it.

The Author has no doubt that there will be a millennium, and is much disposed to concur with an esteemed friend who meets the difficulties by asking, 'Have we not too much been accustomed to view the future coming of Christ as a solitary fact, rather than as a period, full of important events? The first coming of Christ occupied above thirty years, and varied events took place in it. May not his second coming also be a lengthened period: may it not also include a great variety of important events?'

On all these things, our knowledge, till the events take place, must be in a measure obscure. And was not the very obscurity designed to have, among other advantages, this practical effect, that the Church may never be without the privilege and duty of waiting for and expecting the quick return of its beloved and adored Head.

Let it then be remembered that all Christians agree that our Lord Christ shall come, and come suddenly, quickly, and *unexpectedly*. His own statement is express on this point—*Behold I come as a thief*. WE MUST THEN LAY ASIDE ALL CONFIDENCE IN VIEWS THAT WOULD PRACTICALLY INTERFERE WITH IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING, and seek to attain the blessing connected with the announcement of his coming: *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*.

But even were prophetic difficulties a greater hindrance to the expectation of Christ's immediate coming, there is yet no practical difficulty. In the way of Providence, death comes suddenly to all:

what prepares us for death, prepares us for the coming of Christ; this is a decisive day to us as individuals, fixing our state for ever.

There are unhappily but few among real Christians, whose faith and hope excite them to a holy *desire to depart and be with Christ*. There are very many, who from weakness of faith, and perhaps careless walking with God, *through fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage*. The fears of such spring from this cause; they are afraid that they are not true disciples of Christ, and shall not be accepted by him; and though this state of heart probably arises from a SINFUL WANT OF FAITH IN AND SUBMISSION TO ALL HIS TRUTH, and is comfortless and unsatisfactory, yet if such are indeed born of God, their great desire is *to win Christ and be found in him*, and could they be assured that they had an interest in Christ, and would be gathered with his sheep into the heavenly fold, they would look at death without terror. To assist such, I would direct them as the sacred writers do, not to look merely at death, but to look also at the coming of Christ. Death, though in one view a privilege, in another is the wages of sin, and a terrible enemy; but the return of Christ is a blessed hope full of joy, (Titus ii. 13.) A lively faith in the coming of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 23, 52—57) gives us the victory over death and all its sting.

Weigh much then the glories and blessedness of his return, till holy desire be kindled in your heart, and you have no hesitation in joining in the desire of the Church, *even so come Lord Jesus*. These words are, as if the Church with ardent desire exclaimed, 'O hasten thy coming,—let sin be abolished for ever, perfect holiness be given to thy people in glory,

thine elect be gathered, their bodies raised, thyself admired in thy saints, and the transient glimmerings of this distant glory issue on seeing thee as thou art; and being ever with thee, O Lord. O Jesus, thou King and Saviour of thy Church, accomplish the number of thine elect; finish the days of conflict; destroy the works of Satan; swallow up death in victory; manifest thine own glory, and may we soon be with thee in that glory for ever and ever.'

Such is the second advent of Christ, which is before his Church. It is full of terror to all his enemies, for *he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* O reader! be not, for all that this world can give, among those enemies. It is full of consolation to his people, for *he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe.* O reader! may you and I be numbered among his believing saints.

CHAPTER X.

ON JUDGMENTS CONNECTED WITH THE COMING OF
CHRIST, AND THE STATE OF MIND IN WHICH THIS
SHOULD BE VIEWED.

It is the general opinion of those who have most diligently studied the word of prophecy, founded on such passages as Daniel ii. 35, and the general burden of prophecy, that those judgments which have, for the last forty years, more or less, been pouring out upon the seats of the four universal Empires, will be continued and increased, till the utter destruction of all Antichristian powers, and the full and final establishment of the Redeemer's Kingdom at his coming. Respecting the nature and extent of these judgments, and whether their full issue as it respects the seats of the Universal Empires, be not an overwhelming destruction like that of the deluge, only by fire, as well as respecting the nature of the coming and Kingdom of Christ, and whether that coming be personal and visible, or merely the infliction of these judgments, and the establishment of his kingdom; there are greater

differences of opinion ; but assuredly there is enough of clear prediction to awaken the most careless mind, that does indeed believe the Bible to be the word of the living God, and enough of danger and excitement in the actual state of the nations, to give the Christian remarkable signs of the times, and a watchful and prayerful spirit.¹

¹ It is striking to observe the manifestation which the public press of our country, without any idea of illustrating prophetic views, is giving of those characters of the age which are delineated in the word of God. We have continually brought before us specimens of judgments on the countries, workings of infidelity, and the decay of Mahomedanism in these last days.

It is fully admitted, that there is a considerable danger of over-estimating passing transactions ; but there is also a parallel danger of disregarding the signs of the times.

Two descriptions, one characteristic of the state of a leading Papal country, and the other of the Mahomedan states are subjoined, from leading periodicals.

In the account given in the Quarterly Review for November, 1834, of "*Paroles du Croyant*," a French work, recently published, we have the following description of it :—

"An attempt to amalgamate Revolution with Religion, and to preach rebellion and regicide in scriptural phraseology—has created a sensation on the continent which appears one of the signs of the times." It is said that it has run through 15 Editions, been translated by the zeal of the Radical Propagandists, into almost all the European languages,—has been answered by at least a dozen pens,—denounced in Episcopal charges, and interdicted by the Pope. It affects in its form and phrase to be a kind of serious parody of the prophetic Scriptures and more particularly the Apocalypse. It opens with a transcript of some passages of Holy Writ,—"*In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen.*"—"He who has ears," &c.—"*He who has eyes let him see, for the time cometh.*" In one part it brings in the seven men crowned, drinking foaming blood out of a skull, and saying, "*Maudit soit le Christ, qui a ramené sur la terre la liberté.*" It is, in short, described as containing 40 chapters of impiety, sedition, jacobinism, and incomprehensible absurdity, combined with religious expressions from the Scriptures. What a commentary on 2 Timothy iii. 1—5 !

The drying up of the River Euphrates (Rev. xvi. 12.), is equally illustrated by the following statement from the Edinburgh Review of October, 1834, of Conolly's Journey to North India :

"A curious part of the volume before us is the vivid picture which

The judgments to come upon the earth, concern both the church of God, and the world. As to the church, they must be viewed, as far as concerns real Christians, as chastisements. (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.) It appears from various expressions of prophecy, which we may justly suppose to refer to these times, (Dan. xii. 10; Rev. xiv. 12, 13), that times greatly to exercise the patience of God's servants, and of suffering to purify them, are at hand. Our Lord, when announcing his second coming in glory, has again and again said, (Mat. xvi. 25; Mark viii. xxxv.; Luke ix. 24, xvii. 33) *Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* In the words of the late Mr. Cecil, "The church has endured a Pagan and a Papal prosecution; there remains for her an infidel persecution, general, bitter, purifying, cementing."

Interpreters have much differed respecting what is meant by the two witnesses, Rev. xi. 3. The most generally believed opinion is, that they are the whole

they casually exhibit of the internal disorganization—the demoralized state and want of social security in every country of Asia in which the Author travelled. All other accounts tend to the same conclusion. It should seem that at this moment the Mahomedan states all over the world are in a worse condition than at any former period; and not only worse, but also more hopeless. They not only have no prospect of any favourable internal change, but have given up all expectation of it. They are suffering a visible and rapid decay. They are ill governed and wretched within, and weak without. The star of the Moslem is visibly on the descent. They are now arrived at a great crisis. Turkey so long the stronghold of the faith and the terror of Europe, exhibits every symptom of imbecility. The states of Barbary, Egypt, Syria, Greece, the country beyond the Danube, and large provinces on the Black Sea, have been virtually or really wrested from her. The other Mahomedan states are in a similar condition. India, another bulwark of the faith, can no longer yield it any support. Persia is a prey to divisions; and if it ever was as weak before, never was placed near so dangerous a foe."

body of faithful Christians, composed of Jews and Gentiles.¹

It is yet a serious question whether these two witnesses have been slain, (Rev. xi. 7—16.) Some of the most able of modern commentators, as Cuninghame, Faber, and Frère, think that they have, and that the chronology of parts of their systems require this. But they differ as to the events by which the prediction was accomplished. Many different events have indeed been supposed to realise this prediction, and this necessarily increases the doubt whether it be yet accomplished; so that to others there does not appear to have occurred any event in the history of the church yet, on which the mind can rest with unmingled confidence, as having realised this period; and the author is compelled to lean to this opinion, in which he is strengthened by the general statements of Dr. Cressener in his judgments of God upon the Roman Catholic church, though he applied it to events in his day. Whether it be accomplished or not, let us be prepared for trials; and let us remember that all these uncertainties, in no way interfere with the positive duty of being among the wise virgins, ready for their Lord, whensoever he comes.²

¹ Some refer them to the Albigenses and Waldenses; others to the Old and New Testaments, and others to individuals yet to arise. See the appendix to "Homeo on the Millennium," recently republished.

² It is singular to observe how some of the most serious trials that have befallen faithful Christians have lasted about three years and a half. Brown in his "Harmony of the Prophecies," notices these thus:—

"After the council of Constance had laboured about three years and a half to ruin them, the Bohemians in 1418 took arms in their own defence, and marvellously prevailed. After the Lutherans of Germany had lain about three years and a half in a most ruined condition, Maurice of Saxony, who had chiefly reduced them, took arms in their favour, (1551), and procured them an imperial establishment

But the trials that come on the church, are very short, and all for purification, honour and glory; to separate the chaff from the wheat; to prepare the saints for their bliss; and to manifest the reality and excellence of the grace given to them. O may we only stand fast in the Lord, in the assurance of hope that all his blessed promises to sufferers for his sake will be speedily realised.

When the mother of Zebedee's children, expecting the immediate establishment of his kingdom came with the request, *Grant that these my two sons may sit*

of their liberties. [To this period Mr. Cuninghame applies the slaying of the witnesses.] After most bloody persecutions of about three years and a half, the Protestants of Piedmont and Savoy have oftener than once been marvellously relieved. [Mr. Faber refers the death of the witnesses to one of these from 1686 to 1689.] After the English Protestants had been about three years and a half in a most miserable condition, they were delivered by the death of Queen Mary, 1558. After Lewis XIV. of France, and James of England, had for about three years concerted and laboured to extirpate the Protestants, they were relieved by the accession of King William to the throne of Britain. It was but about three years and a half, when the massacre of the Protestants in France, 1572, and in Ireland 1641, were followed by remarkable deliverances to the oppressed. But as these strokes and deliverances were but restricted and particular, and as Satan is not presently bound, nor the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ, we expect a far more dreadful slaughter of Christ's witnesses by seduction and persecution." See his *Harmony*, p. 438, 439.

Mr. Frère, and those who follow him, consider the two witnesses as being the Old and New Testament. (More had also this idea, though not exclusively, see his works, p. 662.) and it is supposed that they were slain during the French revolution. The author can neither enter into this view of the witnesses, nor of their death.

An able writer in the *Investigator*, vol. 3, p. 185—196, refers the slaying of the witnesses to the three years and a half, between the fifth Lateran General Council in 1514, and the protestations of Luther in 1517. This view was answered by Mr. Cuninghame, p. 281, 282.

These appear to have been various precludes, as it were, of the slaying of the witnesses; Satan permitted for a short season to prevail against them, previous to these general slaughter; but it seems still very doubtful if any of them have realized yet the prediction. They are slain by the beast out of the bottomless pit; (Rev. xi. 7.) and that beast appears to be the Roman empire in its last form. (Rom. xvii. 2.)

one on thy right hand and the other on thy left in thy kingdom, our Lord gave her a question, as instructive to us as to her, *are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?* (Mat. xx. 20—23.) If we look for reigning, we must look for previous suffering. (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

The previous state of mind to which Christians may have been brought, may most materially affect their standing in the hour of trial. Hence our Lord was so anxiously careful to prepare the mind of his Apostles for all the sufferings through which they had to go, that they might not be stumbled when called to suffer for his sake. John xvi. 1—4. Mat. xxiv. 9, 10.

But the judgments that come on the WORLD, are of a totally different character to the trials of the church. They are fatal, final, and everlasting; ending in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. O that this might be so set before men as to lead many to repentance!

The general bearing of the prophetic word is that judgments shall come on the nations of the earth before the kingdom of Christ is established. However useful Religious Societies have been or may be, and however clearly it may be, as I doubt not it is, our duty to support them, yet we are not to expect through them more than a preparatory work. The Scriptures lead us not to anticipate a peaceful progress to a blissful reign of spiritual and universal blessedness. The image representing the four universal kingdoms is to be *broken to pieces*; and they to become like the *chaff of the summer thrashing floor*, and the wind to carry them away, and no place be found for

them; or as it is in the explanation of prophecy, the kingdom of the God of heaven *shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms*. It becomes then a most important duty for a spiritual watchman not to deceive those for whom he watches, by *speaking smooth things and prophesying deceits*, (Isa. xxx. 10.,) but honestly and plainly to warn men of their danger.

Mr. Faber, who does not hold the personal præ-millennial Advent of Christ, has drawn the following striking statement of the times in which we live. He says:—

“Even the most careless observer, cannot refrain from noticing and acknowledging the existence of a general fermentation certainly throughout all Europe, perhaps, indeed, well nigh throughout the whole world.” After shewing the manifestations of this in a feverish spirit of change, contempt of our more sober forefathers, and over-weening estimate of our own wisdom, he goes on, “In former times the dawnings of such a spirit were at least marked by a strong sense of religious obligation. But in its maturity this spirit seems portentously determined, so far as unhallowed wishes can prevail, to shut God out of his own world, to refuse all recognition of his sovereign interference, and gracelessly to scoff at the very idea of a nationally and individually superintending Providence.

“When the Spirit of innovating anarchy is thus distinguished by its close alliance with the blasphemous spirit of infidelity; and when, by his ominous junction with such associates, the Roman Man of Sin once more vindicates to himself the accurate prophetic description of the lawless one, we cannot but suspect that matters are in a state of preparation

for that final tremendous overthrow of God's enemies which is the theme of so many inspired prophecies. The very politician of this world, purely in the way of cause and effect, anticipates a wide wasting war of principles, and a series of political convulsions upon a scale of appalling magnitude: and with his anticipations, the devout student of prophecy deriving his expectations from a higher and surer source, fully and unreservedly concurs."

After shewing, that the period of 1260 years must nearly have expired, and that the Ottoman Empire in the East, that "almost universally acknowledged subject of the sixth vial," is apparently hastening to its dissolution, he goes on to observe,

"When that important event shall have occurred, the warning bell will have sounded, which marks the lapse of a peculiarly well-defined and prophetic period, and he that runs may read the remainder, as inscribed with a sun-beam." He here quotes Rev. xvi. 17—20, and refers to Rev. xviii. and xix. 11—21, continuing,

"Well, then, may we both in principle and practice, attend to that awful admonition of the Saviour, which he delivered with a special reference to the final overthrow of the long incorrigible, and at length politically united Antichristian faction. *Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments: lest they walk naked and see his shame.*"¹

It was the opinion of Mr. Scott, that the killing of the witnesses, and the entire suppression of their testimony, was yet to come. His statements also of

¹ See Faber's recapitulated Apostacy.

the judgments to fall on papal countries, in his notes on Rev. xiv. 14—20, are striking. He says, "It is remarkable that 1600 furlongs or 200 miles is exactly the length of the Papal dominions in Italy, [it is also the length of Palestine] and probably these will be deluged with blood in a most awful manner, which is represented by language tremendously hyperbolical." After their speaking of some who had misapplied these to the French Revolution, he adds, "I cannot but think that a more general and almost universal display of divine vengeance on all the kingdoms of the beast, those perhaps excepted, but those only who have fully and decidedly cast off its dominion, is intended by the harvest, [it will have been seen that the author views the harvest in another light; see p. 69] as well as still more tremendous scenes by the judgment."¹

It seems, at first sight, very improbable, that at the time when there is an extended revival of religion, and a vast increase of faithful ministers, and growth of all kinds of exertion to spread the Gospel, and to do good; such things should be the prelude and preparation for judgments and wrath upon the nations. But the growth of wickedness with this growth of good; and the plain predictions of God's word (Rev. xiv. 6, 7. Isa. xi. 4, 9.) and the past history of Noah's preaching before the Deluge, and the prophets raised up before the first destruction of Jerusalem, and the Apostles going forth from Jerusalem, before its second destruction, may lead us to see that this is the thing which God has foretold,

¹ There are many very impressive remarks in Thorpe's *Destinies of the British Empire*, of the judgments to come on the Papal Kingdoms.

and the past history of the Church has illustrated. So far from checking Missionary exertion, this state of things, while it may well abate all self-confidence and glorying, should greatly increase and enlarge our efforts in the uncertainty of worldly things, in the duty of snatching sinners from the wrath to come, and in the blessedness of, like Noah, and the prophets, and the Apostles, confessing Christ boldly amidst a world that denies him.

It is undoubtedly true that the number of faithful ministers has very greatly increased in this country, to the author's personal knowledge, within the last quarter of a century ; but do not let us lull ourselves into a false security from this blessed fact, but rather remember what is recorded not many years before the destruction of Jerusalem : *a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*, Acts vi. 11 ; and but ten years before, it is said, *Thou seest brother how many thousands, (μυριαδες tens of thousands) of Jews there are which believe*, (Acts xx. 20.)

From various passages of God's word it would appear that these judgments will fall with special weight upon those who have been unfaithful to that high trust which God commits to men, when he places them as his own representatives in the offices of rulers, magistrates, and ministers. (See Ezekiel xxxiv. ; Jer. xxiii. 1—3 ; Malachi iii. 2, 3 ; Isaiah ii. 11—17 ; Rev. xix. 18.) May this awakening consideration have its right influence upon our minds.

It is a dangerous delusion for the church to be anticipating peaceful triumphs, prosperous days of enlarging dominion, and uninterrupted successes, when we may be on the verge of trial and conflict, sorrow and suffering. It is much more safe to be

counting the cost and preparing for the cross, and looking to the crown in the way of patient faithfulness unto death, rather than in the way of unmingled glow of success. True it is that it is our richest privilege to fulfil the work which God now assigns to his church, (Rev. xiv. 6—13), and that any spiritual success is a gracious reward for our efforts; but there is considerable danger, (and the author speaks experimentally, having himself often fallen into this snare) of looking only at the bright result, and disregarding the intervening *great tribulation*, (Dan. xii. 1), and *the hour of judgment*, (Rev. xiv. 7.)

It appears from the prediction of our Lord and his Apostles, that a remarkable mixture of disquietude and peace, agitation and underground movements yet, with freedom from external warfare, and full engagement in the works of outward tranquillity, shall mark the very time when our Lord shall come. (Compare Luke xvii. 26—31, xxi. 25, 27; Mat. xxi. 36—39; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) “Were it not,” says Mr. Cuninghame, “that we see both sides of the prophetic picture exhibited in the events of the very time in which we live, it would be difficult to conceive the possibility of reconciling things apparently so opposite as a state of terror, dismay, and agitation, on the one hand; and on the other, one of peace and anticipations of peace, and of worldliness. But no attentive observer of the signs of these times will deny that we see before our eyes both these states of mind.”

If these things increase, we may indeed think that this awfully important event is at hand.

What then is THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND IN WHICH God’s purposes, as revealed in his word, of events yet to take place, should be viewed?

Let us not view them in UNBELIEF, because Christians differ in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy; or because it is perfectly clear that *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea*; let us not lose sight of the prediction that he shall previously *smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked*. Isa. xi. 4, 9. The two are unseparably connected. *Behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you*. Isa. xxxv. 4.

Nor let us view the divine purposes, as regulating our political conduct. The path of precept is the path of duty, and the precepts are plain as the noon-day. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*. Rom. xiii. 1—4. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men*. Titus iii. 1, 2. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well: for so is the will of God, that with well doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honour the king*. 1 Pet. ii. 13—17. *My son fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change*. Prov. xxiv. 21. If the Jews were directed in a foreign land, and when among enemies, *seek the place of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it*, (Jer. xxix. 7,) much more should we seek the peace and welfare of our own beloved

country in every practical way. That advice of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, shews the true secret of national peace: *Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* (Dan. iv. 7.) It is the more necessary now to insist on the spirit, as some of the peculiar features of the last days are, that men are *false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady and high minded.* (2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.) *They walk in the flesh after the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, presumptuous are they and self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.* O may all professing Christians of every denomination be guarded by these divine admonitions from the special temptations of these times. Equally may we be guarded from a snare into which men fell in former ages; as if private Christians had a political part to take in accomplishing God's vengeance, and pulling down what they may conceive opposed to his kingdom. Whatever may be the office of his saints in judging the world at the second coming of Christ, (1 Cor. vi. 2. Psalm cxlvii.) or whatever our duty in confessing Christ, prayer, and holy influence over others, till he do appear personally and raise us to his glory, our present duty is merely that of witnesses to the truth, and sufferers for it; our office is now to *shine as lights holding forth the word of life, and by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*¹

¹ It might seem almost needless to give such a caution, but when we read the attempts of the fifth Monarchy men, the Dedicatory Epistle of even Du Plessis to our King James, and the defence of it by Rivetus, or when we look at the times of the great rebellion, and even at the spirit which seems to animate some who profess religion in the present day, who can think this caution unseasonable?

Again, let us not view the divine purposes in CARELESS INDIFFERENCE as if we had no concern in them; we have the deepest personal interest in them; nor yet in FANCIED SUPERIORITY, as if we by our clear discernment, could discover what was hid from others; nor yet in a DOGMATISING SPIRIT, as if having had an inspired guidance to discern, we had then a divine commission to denounce God's judgments on the world, in our own view of those judgments: nor once more in HOPELESS DESPONDENCY, as if nothing but scenes of misery were before us.

God's purposes should also NOT BE KEPT BACK and concealed from our fellow men, who immersed in the business and cares of this world, give far too little time to the study of God's word. It is our clear duty to confess the truth, and the ministers of God are more especially watchmen on the watch tower, and bound to discern the signs of the times, and to give notice to their people of God's purposes as revealed in his word and developing in his Providence.

This is the more important as these truths are very valuable in giving power to the ministry of the word, and making it effective to the conversion and salvation of men, and to the edification of the Church. Nothing is more calculated to arouse men from the slumber of indifference, nothing more adapted to alarm the infidel in his desperate career, nothing more suited to enable the servant of Christ to bear up against the scoff and banter of evil men, than a firm conviction of the great truths revealed in the prophetic word. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ, is indeed exposed to the peculiar scorn of men, as it was specially foretold that it would be. (2 Pet. iii. 3. Jude 18.) And yet this doctrine is, I

am persuaded of immense value in meeting all the difficulties through which the church has to pass in these last days, and enabling her to bear the trials to which she may be exposed.

The Jewish nation, we are expressly told, though the word of God was read every Sabbath day in the synagogues, (Acts xv. 21) through ignorance of that word, crucified the Lord of glory, (Acts iii. 17, 18.) St. Paul says, *They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, NOR YET THE VOICES OF THE PROPHETS, which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.* Acts xiii. 17. O may we then be warned not to be ignorant of the voices of the prophets; lest we make an irremediable mistake about his second coming, thinking it at a distance, instead of preparing for its approach.

It is remarkable, that the very command to attend to the subject of prophecy, is accompanied with the forewarning that it would be scoffed at, as if to arm the Christian, minding this important part of divine truth, against the peculiar snare to which he would be exposed. Just before the Apostle gives his awful account of the day of the Lord, he says, *I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance that ye may be MINDFUL of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last day, scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of of his coming.*

But let us consider more particularly the state of mind desirable for us with reference to ourselves and to others.

Notice first the STATE OF MIND WITH REFERENCE

TO OURSELVES. The sanctifying power of these truths is an important part of their value; and on this the Scriptures dwell much. The general improvement is given in these words by St. Peter: *What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?—Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless, and account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation.* 2 Peter iii. Our Saviour gives also most solemn instruction. *Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.* Luke xxi. 34—36.

But this subject will be noticed in the concluding reflections.

THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND, and the way in which we should speak of these things RESPECTING OTHERS, is also of considerable importance. It is beautifully set before us in two striking examples, both previous to judgments upon corrupt and fallen churches.

The first example is that of JEREMIAH. Search through his prophecies and his book of Lamentations, and observe his faithfulness, his tenderness, his sympathy, his diligent attention to his office, and his spirit of prayer and zeal for the good of his country, and his triumphant faith in a happy ultimate issue. You cannot read his prophecies without seeing his FAITHFULNESS in distinctly announcing the divine judgments, amidst the opposition of his own kindred and neighbours, (Jer. xi. 21), according to the commission given him, (Jer. i. 17—19.)

How expressive his feelings of TENDERNESS: *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people.* Jer. ix. 1. *Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease; for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, and a very grievous blow.* Jer. xiv. 17.

How strong are his expressions of SYMPATHY! *My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of trumpet, the alarm of war; destruction upon destruction is cried,* (Jer. iv. 19.) How earnest are his EXPOSTULATIONS with those who refused to repent and turn to God. *Hear ye and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears.* Jer. xiii. 15—17. His diligent ATTENTION TO HIS OFFICE, and desire to turn off, if possible, the impending ruin in the midst of all his expectations of judgment, is very striking. *As for me I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee; neither have I desired the woeful day thou knowest.* Jer. xvii. 16. (See also chap. 38, 42, &c.) His SPIRIT OF PRAYER, for his country is quite affecting. *O Lord though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake. Why shouldst thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save. We are called by thy name, leave us not.* Jer. xiv. 7, 9. Equally marked was his ZEAL FOR HIS COUNTRY'S GOOD.—Always ready to help them, he preferred to abide with the remnant in their sufferings, to an honourable station in Babylon, (Jer. xl.) and sought

the best good of that remnant amidst all their ill usage and ingratitude. O how certainly will a true knowledge of God's purposes, produce in a mind under the teachings of his grace, a patriotic as well as a holy course of conduct !

Then, observe his joyful anticipation of future times of triumph, as set before us in chapters 30 to 33, in the midst of which, we have that rich expression of God's purposes of love: *I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul ; with its effect on the mind of Jeremiah : upon this I awaked and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me.* Jer. xxxi. 25, 26.

Now this is the spirit which I pray God largely to give all, who from his scriptures anticipate future judgments before the day of millennial glory. O how contrary to this is that spirit of bitterness which is exhibited, on the one hand, in receiving the statements of faults of our Dissenting Brethren, with feelings of amusement and pleasure ; or, on the other hand, in delighting to expose the opposite faults of ministers in our establishment ; or in speaking bitter things against millennarians, as enthusiastic and wild, or anti-millennarians as infidel and apostate. The faults of others are the true Christian's grief and burden. We must *not rejoice in iniquity, but in the truth* ; and God eminently distinguishes those, not who bring railing accusations against others, nor who are interested and amused by the detail of the faults of those who differ from them, but who *sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of our land.*

It must, however, be admitted that there was a sad mixture of human infirmity even in Jeremiah himself. *Heavily tried, opposed, and persecuted, human cor-*

ruption breaks forth, (See Jer. xv. 10; xx. 14—18) in irritable, angry, and impatient expressions. It is true that the ingenuousness with which he lays open his own feelings is exemplary, and the very badness of those feelings is profitable and humbling. Let not any despise God's truth because of the infirmities of his servants announcing that truth. Let not any despair of themselves because of inward corruptions. Let us all give the glory to God for the graces which he gave to Jeremiah; and let us learn lessons of humility and human corruption, in the outbreaks of nature amidst his excellences.

There is ANOTHER EXAMPLE in the Scripture full also of holy instruction. It is not that of the Apostle Paul as set before us in Rom. ix. 10, 11, or in the Epistle to the Hebrews; nor the plain practical faithfulness of the apostle James as set before us in his Epistle, but it is one without fault; that of OUR DIVINE LORD himself. What a spirit was his! What peculiar and unequalled faithfulness in reproving sin! (Mat. xxiv.) What tenderness in his feelings towards the sinner! *When he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.* Luke xix. 41—44. Again and again in the spirit of ardent love to his people, he would have gathered the children of Jerusalem together under his wings, but they would

not. Mat. xxiv. 38. When the women bewailed and lamented him on his way to crucifixion, his sympathizing heart turned at once from his own sufferings to the sorrows coming upon them, Luke xxiii. 28, and his prayer when nailed to the tree, was for his murderers: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Luke xiii. 34. In short he made himself one entire offering and sacrifice for the sins of others, that he might procure for those who rejected and crucified him everlasting salvation! O unequalled love! O glorious example! Blessed Jesus! give to all thy disciples grace to tread in thy steps, and with thy faithfulness, sympathy, love and self-sacrifice, to look at all thy purposes towards thy church.

But it was not merely in the dark prospect of judgment that our Saviour furnishes such a lesson for us in these days—but also in the bright prospect of glory yet to come, he bids us *lift up our heads*. How sweet and rich the promises which open his sermon on the mount! how enlarged the spirit of prayer which he taught us daily to use—*hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!* how often he presented the richest glories of that kingdom as an animating object of hope, (Mat. v. 2—10; xiii. 43; xix. 28. Luke xxii. 28—30), and when he rose again and was seen of his apostles forty days, the subject of his intercourse during that period was *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*. O may we never despise, or slight, or neglect that glorious hope which occupied the mind, and engaged the converse of our divine Lord and his apostles, during that most interesting period *which intervened between his resurrection and ascension*.

Our prevailing views as Christians should be cheerful, hopeful, and joyful. *Lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh.* The present state of the world is full of sin and full of misery, *the whole world lieth in the wicked one ; the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now ;* but this state shall not long continue ; the word of God leads us to anticipate, after the throes and pains of these last days, *the manifestation of the sons of God, and the creature itself—delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

While then we sigh over the sins which we witness, and with all the earnestness, pity, and sympathy, like Noah of old, testify to the worldly and the wicked their danger, and the aggravated condemnation of those who *hold the truth in unrighteousness ;* we cannot but rejoice in the conviction that *the time is short ;*—soon the Saviour returns, and though it be first to punish the wicked, yet, beyond that dark scene, all is light and love, glory and blessedness to the church of the living God, and ultimately to the whole world.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MILLENNIUM AND FIRST RESURRECTION.

THE millennium, means *a thousand years*. It is the period predicted under that name by St. John in the 20th Chapter of Revelation. The first Resurrection is the event there predicted, *the souls of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their forehead, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years—but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, This is the first resurrection.*

On this prediction there are various opinions : some think it past, though they differ in their exposition of its meaning. But the most general opinion of modern divines has been that it is designed to point out a spiritual resurrection of men animated by the spirit of the martyrs and a happy spiritual state of the church yet to come.

On a subject, yet as the author is persuaded, unfilled, and which from the early ages of the church, has occasioned so many differences of opinion, modesty of sentiment especially becomes us. It may

be well here rather to let others, and especially to let the Holy Scriptures speak, than to enter into any lengthened detail of reasons which lead the author to think that the first resurrection (Rev. xx.) is a literal, rather than a spiritual one. Some of those indeed who have pleaded most earnestly for its being a spiritual resurrection, (as Bishop Hall and the late Mr. Gipps) consider it as already past. So that Bishop Hall said nearly 200 years ago, in his *Revelation Unrevealed*, one of the strongest works against Millennarians, "For my part, I am persuaded in my soul, that the coming of our Saviour is near at hand." It seems as if God would lead his church to prepare for the coming Saviour, whatever views they may take of that which follows his coming.

Those who look upon Millennial views affirmatory of the restoration of the Jews, and the previous resurrection of the saints, as dangerous innovations, and opening the way to other errors, would do well to listen to the following testimony of Bishop Van-Mildert, who, by the extent of his learning, and the general sobriety of his judgment, is at the farthest remove from all suspicions of wildness and extravagance.

"Nothing is more certain than that the Scriptures clearly foretell the conversion and restoration of the Jews, and that a most satisfactory pledge of the fulfilment of the predictions is already given by what has actually been brought to pass in their dispersion and preservation.

"Respecting the Millennium, or reign of the saints on earth, for a 1000 years after the events shall have taken place, there is room for a great variety of conjecture. Whether with the earlier fathers of the

Christian Church, and some eminent expositors of modern times, we are to expect, that a resurrection and triumph of the saints shall precede the general and final resurrection; or whether we hold with others that it is not to be a reign of persons raised from the dead, but a renovated state of the Church, flourishing gloriously for 1000 years, after the conversion of the Jews, and the flowing in of all the nations to the Christian faith; it is not necessary to determine. The former interpretation seems to offer the least violence to the language of scripture, and is supported by great authority. But our trust in the promises of God depends not on the determination of this question; since whichever interpretation we adopt, the splendid predictions of the inspired writers both in the Old and New Testament, will doubtless be verified either in a literal or a figurative acceptation to their fullest extent. In the mean time the condition of the Church, antecedently to that its triumphant state may reasonably be expected to exhibit a diversified scene of trial and victory, of peril and deliverance, of depression and recovery, similar to what it has hitherto undergone."¹

The sentiments also of the learned, humble, and pious Mede may well weigh with those who really know his writings. He remarks, "I incline on the whole to the opinion founded on the sentence of St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. that all the righteous will rise again during the course of the Millennial Kingdom: but in a certain order, according to that of the Apostle (1 Cor. xv. 23.) first in the very commencement of the Millennium, the Martyrs, then the rest

¹ See Van Mildert's Boyle Lectures, p. 456—458.

according to the decree of God the Arbiter, and that this is called *the first resurrection*, or *the resurrection of the Just*. Afterwards, the Millennium being completed, the wicked will rise, the last and universal Judgment be completed; these to be thrust down to the fire, and the saints to be carried up to the heavenly mansions, where they will live for ever with Christ.—I do not indeed think we are to expect two Advents of Christ: but one, namely, that in which he will judge the quick and the dead at his appearing; but that both his Advent and his judgment will be protracted through the period of a thousand years.”¹

Some, who believe that our Lord will personally appear for the conversion of the Jews, doubt whether there will be *then* a resurrection of his saints. We must ever speak with reserve and humility of events yet to take place, but the author after weighing the arguments on each side, though he differs from friends whom he highly esteems and loves, is inclined to think that such a previous resurrection is revealed, not only in the seat of the doctrine, Rev. xx. 1—6, but also, in the general statements that occur respecting the resurrection. At the restoration of Israel, before the Millennium, *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*, (Dan. xii. 2.) This, the Jewish Rabbi, Saadiah Gaon, thus interprets,—“This is the resurrection of the dead of Israel, whose lot is to eternal life; but those who do not awake, they are the destroyed of the Lord, who go down to the habitation beneath, that is Gehenna, and then shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”²

¹ See the Extract in the Christian Observer for 1828, p. 451.

² See the literal resurrection ably supported in a paper signed

It is curious and interesting to know what sentiments the Jews, with only Old Testament light, held on this subject. Though they differed materially in their views of the resurrection in other respects, yet they generally identified the coming of the Messiah, and a resurrection.¹ It is fully shewn in Mr. Humphrey's account of the ideas of the Jews on this subject, that they held that there were three states or conditions after this life; (1) a state of incomplete happiness or misery after death, till the general resurrection; (2) the reign of the Messiah, always joined (through a great mistake Mr. H. adds) to the resurrection; and (3rd.) The world of souls; or a state which succeed the resurrection of the dead and the reign of the Messiah. The Jewish writers generally mention together the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead, and frequently consider them as branches of the same proposition, and from the first Psalm verse 4, assert that the resurrection was peculiar to the just; and on the second Psalm Kimchi quotes an ancient apothegm, "The benefit of the rain is common to the just and unjust, but the resurrection from the dead is the peculiar privilege of those who have lived righteously:" but Abarbanel, and Menasseh Ben Israel shew that the wicked are said to have no part in the world to come, as having no advantage or happiness

Edinensis in the Investigator, vol. iii. p. 1. In the same Paper, Dan. xii. 2, is thus rendered, *Many of them (i. e. the saints) that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. These (raised ones) are destined to everlasting life; and the others (the οἱ λοιποὶ of John) to shame and EVERLASTING CONTEMPT.*

¹ There is a long dissertation concerning the notions of the Jews about the resurrection of the dead in Humphrey's Athenagoras and Manasseh Ben Israel de resurrectione Mortuorum, 1636, svo. See also the 2d vol. of Schoettgenius, and especially p. 566—594.

in it, but are, on the contrary, consigned over to punishment for their iniquities."

Leaving however Jewish twilight, let us come to the clear day of the New Testament. The whole statement of the Apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 14—18, clearly respects the resurrection of the righteous, at the coming of the Lord, and their being brought with him; and when this is connected with the statements in the 2nd Epistle (ch. i. 7—9; ii. 1—8.) respecting (as the Author is persuaded) the same coming, and the destruction of the Man of Sin at that coming, it is conclusive, in his view, that the saints rise before the Millennium, it being generally agreed, at least by those who hold a future Millennium, that the Man of Sin will be destroyed before that blessed æra. According with this, is the statement in the 15th Corinthians, and in particular the expressions, *Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming; and then cometh the end.* The Author cannot see why there should not be a lengthened interval between each of these three events; as there has manifestly been above 1800 years between Christ's resurrection and his second coming. The statement in the 52d verse, which, as the expressions, and the connection, equally manifest, relates to the resurrection of the righteous; the strength of the Apostle's desire to attain this resurrection, Phil. iii. 11; and the emphatic distinctions of a special resurrection promised to the righteous, (Luke xiv. 4; xx. 35, 36. Heb. xi. 35. John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54,) add farther weight and strength to these observations. Nor is there any thing inconsistent with them in the expressions, John v. 28, *the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and*

come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation: when the term *hour* (*ωρα*) is translated *time*, Rom. xiii. 11, *season*, 2 Cor. vii. 8, and in such a passage as 1 John ii. 18, as well as in the one preceding the text quoted (John v. 25,) manifestly applied to the whole period of the Christian Dispensation.¹ It appears to the Author that the 20th of Revelation is, like all the rest of the Book, symbolic with literal explanations. We find literal explanations running through the Book.—See chap. i. 20; xvii. 15; xix. 8; and so we find in the 20th chapter, the literal explanation, *which is the Devil*, and *this is the first resurrection*, a similar literal explanation. The difficulties that have been made on the subject are resolvable into our ignorance. How little is it possible for us to know of the heavenly Jerusalem in which the saints dwell, or of the nature and glories of their risen bodies, or of their being equal to the angels, (Luke xx. 30,) and how material must be the distinction between them, and men living in the flesh. We may soon get into the atmosphere of Socinianism and reject every doctrine of the Bible if mysteries and difficulties be a stumbling-block to our faith, instead of producing their right effect, a believing and patient waiting for the manifestation of God's will.

Mede justly remarks, "You must distinguish between the state of *the New Jerusalem* and the state of *the Nations which walk in the light thereof*; they shall not be both one." Therefore what is spoken of the New Jerusalem must not be applied to the

¹ See Rose's Parkhurst, under *ωρα*.

whole Church which shall then be. New Jerusalem is not the whole Church, but the metropolis thereof, and of the new world. The state of the nations which shall walk in her light, though happy and glorious, yet shall be changeable, as appears by the commotion of the nations, reduced at the end of the 1000 years. But the state of those who dwell in the New Jerusalem shall be beyond all risk of change, (Rev. xx. 6.)—(See Works, p. 772.)

Though the Holy City, New Jerusalem, comes down from God, out of heaven, it is not said to rest upon the earth. The expression *we shall reign on the earth*, Rev. v. 10, (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) may mean *over the earth*, as (ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων) is *over the waters*, (Rev. xi. 6.) The expressions in the 1st Thessalonians iv. 14—17, lead rather to our being ever with the Lord in the air, than to dwelling with men in the flesh on earth. But on these things who shall be positive, or almost venture upon expressing an opinion, farther than, to use the Martyr Ridley's beautiful expression, "The Scripture leadeth us by the hand."

It was Dr. Henry More's idea that neither Christ nor his saints would be visible to men on earth during the Millennium; but they would "live with Christ in his immutable and everlasting kingdom in heaven, for ever and ever." He says, "nor do I think it necessary that the sons of this first resurrection should at all appear to us; their celestial bodies in which they have vivicated, being naturally invisible, and therefore, a kind of miracle for us to see them; and no more necessary than the exhibiting those souls to view which Christ carried to heaven in triumph after his resurrection, which yet he did not

exhibit to the sight of the world." The fact of the first resurrection, and the full explanation of that fact, are totally different questions ; as is the fact of the Trinity, and the explanation of that blessed and most certain mystery. We believe on the testimony of revelation ; we shall by-and-bye *see face to face*, and *know as we are known*.

The earliest Fathers held a literal resurrection. The later Fathers, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, interpreted the passages, Rev. xx. 4, spiritually. The following account given by Lardner, an anti-millennarian, will shew briefly the views of the Fathers. He first quotes Jerome's Comment on Isaiah as follows:—"If we understand the Revelation literally, we must judaize ; if spiritually or figuratively, as it is written, we shall seem to contradict many of the ancients, particularly Latins, Tertullian, Victorinus Lactantius ; and Greeks likewise, especially Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, against whom Dionysius, Bishop Alexandria, [this Dionysius threw out doubts against the Revelation, as not being the writing of the Apostle John] a man of uncommon eloquence, wrote a curious piece, deriding the fable of a thousand years, and the terrestrial Jerusalem, adorned with gold and precious stones ; rebuilding the Temple, bloody sacrifices, sabbatical rest, circumcision, marriages, [he here adds other descriptions of a carnal millennium] and servitude of the nations ; and after this, wars, armies, triumphs, and slaughters of conquered enemies, and the death of the sinner a hundred years old. Him, Appolinarius answered, in two volumes, whom not only the men of his own sect, but most of our own people likewise, follow in this point. So

that it is no hard matter to prove what a multitude of persons I am like to displease."

It is striking to observe from one so averse to the doctrine as Jerome, such acknowledgements of its extensive prevalence in the 4th century. Lardner goes on to state, "It must be owned, that the orthodox Millennarians do speak of a 1000 years reign of Christ before the general resurrection, which good men having been raised from the dead, should spend on this earth, when there shall be an extraordinary plenty of the fruits of the earth; when also they shall feast upon them; when Jerusalem shall be rebuilt; when likewise there will be marriages, and bringing forth of children; but that they received marriage, and fruits of marriage, to belong to any of the RAISED SAINTS, does NOT appear to me a clear point. Origen, and some others, speak as if this was the expectation of the Millennarians, even such as were orthodox, as it seems of some of them, which Origen therefore mentions, with great concern of mind, being apprehensive that such an opinion, if known by the heathens, might be a great reproach upon the Christian religion. And St. Jerome immediately after the words just cited from him, insinuates the same thing of the orthodox Millennarians of his time, for which reason he reminds them of the saying of our Lord and Saviour (Matt. xxii. 29, 30.) Jerome writes to the same purpose, in another place, of his commentaries upon the same prophet, but Irenæus and Lactantius, who were Millennarians, do not express themselves in that manner; what they say is, that at the time of the first resurrection, there will be found some good men living upon the earth, and that of them, in the space of a thousand years, shall be born

a numerous race, a godly seed over whom likewise the raised saints are to reign, and by whom they are to be served."

It must be remembered that Mede, in various parts of his works, complains heavily of Jerome's perversion and misstatement of the writings of others. He tells Dr. Twisse "how wrongfully the ancient Chiliasts, and Lactantius by name, are charged to hold that the saints which rise from the dead, shall marry and get children; whereas he expressly affirms it only of those who shall be alive in the body, when Christ comes, nor did any of the rest of the fathers Justin, Irenæus, Melito, think otherwise. From Jerome's not mentioning JUSTIN MARTYR, he supposes that he was afraid of his antiquity and authority.¹

¹ See Mede's works, 812, 836. Mr. Mede and Dr. Horne have given us an extract from the works of Gelasius, of Cyzicus, who flourished about 476, and gave a history of the Acts of the Nicene Council. As this has been much quoted, it is right to observe, that Dupin throws discredit on various points in this history, as does Weisman, vol. i. p. 416, 485. But it has been inserted in Binnius, the Louvre, and other Editions of the Councils, and it bears on the face of it marks of that cautious scriptural statement, which is the result of conflicting minds stating a truth on which they differ. The extract is taken from certain forms of Ecclesiastical Doctrine, according to which all teachers in the Church were to frame their discourses, and if it were a genuine account, it would be remarkable, as proving the general opinions of the Church to 325, the date of that Council, but it may safely be received as Gelasius' view of the subject. The extract is as follows. The world was made imperfect (*μικροτερον*) because of foreknowledge, (for God foresaw that man would sin) therefore we expect a new heaven and a new earth, according to the holy Scriptures, when shall shine forth the appearance of the kingdom of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. As then, as Daniel says, the saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, and there shall be a pure earth, holy, a land of the living and not of the dead, which David foreseeing by the eye of faith, cried out, (Psalm xxvii. 13.) I believe to see the goodness of the Lord: *the land of the living; a land of the meek and humble.* For bless

Let not, however, differences of opinion ;—let not the obscurity of unfulfilled prophecy, or the impossibility of conceiving how it can take place, stumble any mind. Some of the prophecies, which before fulfilment, were dark, apparently contradictory, and of impracticable accomplishment, were, in the fulfilment, harmoniously and exactly realised ; and so we may be sure it will be in this glorious hope of the church.¹ It stands clearly and brightly displayed in the pages of the Bible ; and no part of it shall fail. Nor have any events that have yet taken place in the general hope of the church, at all corresponded to the nature and blessedness of the Millennium set before us in the 20th of Revelation, or the general prosperity of Christ's kingdom set forth throughout the Holy Scriptures.

There are various minuter points on which there does not appear to be the same light, which there is respecting the fact of a first resurrection : as whether there be a visible appearance and visible reign of Christ and his saints, or an order in the resurrection.

says Christ, (Matt. v. 5.) are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. And the prophet says, (Isaiah xxvi. 6.) "the feet of the meek and the humble shall tread upon it."

¹ Bishop Horsley has manifested THE WISDOM AND LOVING KINDNESS of that obscurity in which prophecy is veiled till fulfilled. He shews, that if prophecy be really of divine original, a part of the contrivance must be a mysterious disguise by which the events of remote futurity, (such at least as depend on the free actions of men) are kept in a measure concealed. "Hence it follows that whatever private information the prophet might enjoy, the Spirit would never permit him to disclose the ultimate intent and particular meaning of the prophecy in the bare terms of the prediction." The conduct of our Lord towards the Apostles, may illustrate this observation. He conversed with his disciples during the forty days that he was upon earth respecting the kingdom of God ; but very little of those conversations are recorded. They might be needful for the Apostles themselves ; but were not to be revealed to the church at large, except in the obscurer form given in the book of Revelation.

of the righteous, (Dan. xii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 24), and whether there be an earlier and special resurrection of those who have suffered for Christ, (Rom. viii. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; Rev. xx. 4; Phil. iii. 2;) or whether, as seems from (Rev. xi. 18), all the servants and saints of Christ, small and great have their reward together;¹ and on the general conflagration, it does not appear decisively, from any thing in St. Peter's account, in what part of that *day of judgment*, 2 Peter

¹ Lord Mandeville, (in his learned and pious work, the "*Horæ Hebraicæ*") has some valuable disquisition. Respecting the Kingdom of God, he supposes it to be that which is now existing, in which Christ reigns co-ordinately with the Father, till all opposition be put down,—then, at his coming, Christ's own reign over a renovated earth begins subject to the Father, (1 Cor. xv. 24, &c.) He supposes, (from Dan. xii. 2; and John v. 28, 29), that at Christ's coming, the resurrection of the just and unjust will take place, not denying a priority of order in the resurrection of the righteous, but only asserting that there will be no dispensation intervening between the resurrection of the one class and that of the other. He has a lengthened argument (chiefly founded on the context of Isa. lxx. 19., lxvi. 8—10, and 2 Pet. iii. 4—10, and Rev. xxi. 1) to shew this. He considers from 2 Tim. iv. 1, that our Lord will judge the quick at his appearing, and the dead during his kingdom, for the quick saints shall be changed at his appearing, and the quick wicked shall be destroyed at the brightness of his coming, or the manifestation of his presence; then there only remains the dead to be judged during the kingdom of Christ.

The whole order of the resurrection and judgment, appears to be, according to his statement, as follows:—

1. The resurrection of the sleeping saints. 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17.
2. The mutation of quick saints.
4. Judgment of dead apostates. Rev. xx. 12. Rom. ii. 16, and Joel iii. 12.
5. Judgment of dead heathens.
6. The rest of the dead at the conclusion of the 1000 years. Rev. xx. 5.

On the whole, Lord Mandeville's statement tends to strengthen the view of the first Resurrection at the coming of our Lord before the Millennium; but he has peculiar views of the resurrection and judgment of the wicked generally, during the Millennium and of *the dead*, in Rev. xx. 12, being the spiritually dead:—He thinks that, in verse 5, *the rest of the dead*, means the literally dead, and leaves us without an interpretation as to what *the rest of the dead* can mean. Those who wish to see the arguments to establish these statements must refer to the original work.

iii. 7, the *day of the Lord*, which is as a thousand years, may take place: or whether there may not be, as some have supposed, a partial fire at the beginning, (2 Thess. i. 7; Rev. xix. 20,) and another more complete at the close of that day, (Rev. xx. 9.) About the order of events foretold, and in what part of that order the new heavens and the new earth will take place, there seems also to be much of that obscurity in which unfulfilled events are purposely left; at least the Author's present want of knowledge prevents him giving any opinion on such points.¹

Having now cleared our way through the difficulties of this very important hope of the Church of Christ, let us rise above these mists of controversy, and view the subject in the way which the Apostles set it before us. *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who*

¹ Though the author has hardly attempted to answer objections, he has on every account felt it to be his duty, as far as he had opportunity to weigh the objections made against the præmillennial Advent and first resurrection, by Hall, Whitby, Vitringa, Faber, Hamilton, Gipps, &c. and difficulties which have arisen in his own mind, and he cannot but give his testimony that there is no plain scriptural argument which he can consider as conclusive, against the personal Advent of Christ, before the millennium and the resurrection of the saints at his coming. Many of those which have been judged to be objections, do in truth, tend, in his opinion, when carefully weighed, to confirm this sentiment; other objections only relate to peculiar views of individuals. It appears to him, that we have too much disregarded on the point, the sentiments of the early fathers, which were valuable and worthy of attention, renouncing however what was merely carnal either in the views, or reputed views, of some of them. The general answers which have been given to Whitby, by Rudd, Fleming, &c. and the writings of Mede, Cuninghame, Abdiel's Essays, Begg, Anderson, Greswell and others, contain such answers to the objections, as are conclusive to his own mind, and make it unnecessary for him to enter into controversy.

shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body; we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. O let not the differences of Christians keep us from this waiting state of mind: this blessed hope; this heavenly conversation; this glorious prospect. It is a reality; there is for Christ's waiting people a crown of life and glory; there is a kingdom of light and love; and joy and blessedness; the Saviour will return and that speedily, and raise his expecting people to be with him for ever. We shall not be ashamed of our hope. It will exceed our largest thoughts. Brethren in Christ, let us now be faithful to Christ; let us now confess him in the midst of the infidel world! let us now be willing to suffer for his sake. The day of suffering is short, the day of glory is one eternal day. It approaches, it is at the door. Let us, like the racer, eagerly hasten for the prize; let us *be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

It is a just remark of Dr. Pye Smith, that “the prophecies respecting the Kingdom of the Messiah, its extension and duration, and the happiness of his innumerable subjects, are, in a much greater proportion, than those which describe his humiliation to sufferings, and his dreadful death.”

Indeed, the universal reign of the triumphant Messiah to the glory of God, is the grand result of God's dispensations.—*God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The nature of the kingdom of Christ is a subject then of intense interest, and calls for distinct consideration. It has various aspects and circumstances; but still in all its forms the nature of this kingdom is substantially the same in its principle and character at all times. It is the reign of God over his creature man,—his supreme ascendancy over the heart,—and man's entire, willing, and joyful submission to him

Man is by nature under the bondage of sin and Satan, alienated from God, and at enmity with him. When a man is born again of water and of the Spirit he sees the kingdom of God, and enters into it. Satan is resisted and dethroned—self is subdued, and God's will is our rule, our will and our joy. This kingdom is within, and its blessings are *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. The Holy Spirit is in the absence of Christ, the great administrator of this kingdom.

However different the extent and outward form of the kingdom; however great its ultimate triumph and glories, this is still its peculiar feature and character—God reigning supreme in the heart of the once alienated and rebellious sinner; and all dispensations are but hastening on the more fully this great result.

The names of this kingdom are varied; it is called *the Kingdom of God*,¹ as he is the Originator and Author, and his glory its great object; *the Kingdom of Heaven*, as it is heavenly in its origin and principles; it comes down from heaven, and tends to unite earth and heaven; it is the *Kingdom of Christ*, as he is the reigning Monarch; and *the Kingdom of*

¹ There is a very elaborate excursus by Koppe, on the phrase *the Kingdom of God*, in which he goes through all the principal passages containing the phrase in the New Testament, whether spoken before the birth of Christ, or by Christ himself, in his life, or his Apostles afterwards, and shows that they must not be understood merely of the Christian Religion or Church, or of the spiritual and invisible power by which Christ defends his Church on earth, but of a kingdom yet to be set up by the Messiah. He first states that the Apostles adopted the phrase from the sacred writings and the familiar discourses of the Jews, and refers to Psalm ii; xiv; cx. Isa. ix; xi xxv. 8; xxviii. 5, xlii. xlix. 6; lli; liii; Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6; xxx; xxxi. xxxiii 5. Ezek. xvii. 22; xxix. 21; xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5. Micah iv. v. Zech. iii. 8; iv. 12; ix. 9; xiv. 1. Mal. iii. 1. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14

Israel, as the Jews are to have a pre-eminence arising from the glory of their king, (Isa. lix. 20, 21, and lx.); and *the Everlasting Kingdom*, as the happiness of those belonging to it will endure for ever.

From the very beginning, the Scripture Prophecies, not obscurely intimate this kingdom, in such predictions as these—*the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent: in thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed: unto him shall the gathering of the people be: out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion.*

In the Psalms of David, and in the promises made to him, we have a clear developement of this kingdom.—See 2 Sam. vii. 10—16; Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4, 29, 36, 37; Psalm ii. lxxii. cx. &c. &c. These promises assured the throne of Israel to David's posterity for ever, by the strongest possible confirmation; and shew that his seed would be the long promised and expected Messiah.

In the Prophets we have a still farther display of the glories and extent of the same kingdom.—See Isaiah xxxii. lx., &c.; and it was still assured to David's seed, "If ye can break my covenant of the

ix. 24—27. He shews that from these predictions, the Jews expected that the future king or Messiah, was to restore the true worship of Jehovah, from which men in former ages had all gone astray; to strengthen their minds that they may keep it fast; to reform their conduct, expiate the sins of his people, and to suffer much, being neglected by the greater part of his nation; nevertheless that the same Messiah, sustained by divine power, should with splendour and majesty truly Royal and Divine, govern his people, make war against their enemies, and free them from the yoke of a foreign power, and at length claim the empire of the world (in which the Romans then boasted) for his own nation; along with the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom, the Jews expected the end of the present condition of human beings, and the resurrection of the pious from the dead. See Koppe on Thessalonians, and Investigator, Vol. ii. p. 208.

day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne."

But through the sins of Israel, the times of the Gentiles were to come in, and a suspension of the actual reigns of any kings, till the Messiah should come, was foretold. When the throne was overturned in the person of Zedekiah, Ezekiel was commissioned to utter this memorable prediction against that last reigning king of Judah: *Remove the diadem and take off the crown; this shall not be the same. Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high: I will overturn, overturn, overturn, till he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.*

When our Lord was about to be born, the promise was by the angel directly applied to him as his right. *The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

That these promises remain to be yet fulfilled, we judge from the following considerations.—1. Christ has never yet sat on the throne of David.—2. He has never yet reigned over the house of Jacob.¹—3. Daniel predicts that his kingdom should be established on the ruins of the ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire, (Dan. ii. 42—44).—4. The Apostles were told, that the time for restoring the Kingdom to

¹ The Jews rejected our Lord when he first came (Luke xvii. 25,) and his shining as lightning from one part under heaven to the other was to be after that (verse 24). A period is predicted, when they shall see him again, and shall say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, (Matt. xxiii. 39). It is admitted, that we know little of the way in which Christ shall reign over them; but we have seen nothing yet that meets the plainness and fulness of the promises.

Israel was reserved in the Father's power.—5. All Christ's Disciples have daily to pray, *Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

There is, however, a preparatory and spiritual kingdom already established. Our Lord tells the Jews again and again, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* He compares it to a *field where tares and wheat grow together till the harvest.* He warned them: *the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* When men are truly converted, they are said to be *delivered from the kingdom of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.* We must not therefore lose sight of this spiritual kingdom. It is the bud before the flower.—It is the growing of the seed before the harvest.—It is the preparatory state of the kingdom; but it is not the power—it is not the full glory of the kingdom.

But so far from losing sight of this spiritual kingdom, many modern writers have thought that it is the only kingdom of Christ on earth, and that the spiritual triumphs of the gospel before the thousand years, and its full and universal success during that period, is the full and only establishment of this kingdom of Christ in this world. This was the Author's view for a lengthened period, till compelled by scriptural evidence, (as has been already laid before the Reader, under the coming of Christ) to abandon it as untenable.

The instructions and parables of our Lord lead us to think that there will, till his return, be the church and the world; and no universal reception of his Gospel, till after that second coming. It is impos-

sible, in the Author's view, to harmonize the various statements of Scripture, and the expectations held out to believers through the Epistles, of a kingdom yet to come, on the system of a merely spiritual and universal kingdom.

The remarkable question on this subject, put by the apostles to our Lord, deserves particular attention. After he had been *speaking of them* during the forty days that he was seen of them, *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, their minds were so excited, that the very last question which we read of their proposing to him before his ascension was, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.*¹ His reply was, *it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put into his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, &c.*

Our Lord's answer at first seems discouraging and darkening to their hopes, and yet, like other appa-

¹ The connection of the Kingdom given to Israel, and the Kingdom of God, is brought before us here and in various Old Testament prophecies, though the exact nature of the connection, and the identity or difference of these kingdoms, is yet veiled in the obscurity of unfulfilled prophecy. It appears from Isaiah, that after the Redeemer comes to Zion, (Isa. lix. 20; Rom. xi. 26) and *the Glory of the Lord is risen upon her, the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.* The prophet declares *the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee; and asserts, the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted,* (Isa. lx. 5. 12;) and Zechariah connects with the coming of our Saviour and his saints, (Zech. xiv. 5) — *living waters going forth from Jerusalem;* and then the blessed truth: *The Lord shall be king over all the earth in that day; there shall be one Lord, and his name one,* (Zech. xiv. 9.)

We doubt not whatever first fruits may have been given, the fulness of these promises is yet to flow in at the latter day glory of the church. In another place, our Lord connects *the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud, the redemption of his people drawing nigh, and the kingdom of God being nigh at hand,* (Luke xxi. 27, 28, 31.)

rently dark answers, it is full of profitable thoughts. The very darkness may shew that he could not mean to speak of a *merely spiritual* kingdom; there was no reason to withhold from them the fact of the time and season of its commencement; that had already commenced, and of the increase of that, he tells them explicitly in the promise, which he in his answer, gives *of the Holy Ghost coming upon them.*

The very question is instructive. When we remember that he had just been *opening their understanding to understand the Scriptures*, (Luke xxiv. 45,) and conversing with them *for forty days on the kingdom of God*, (Acts i. 3); it is most improbable that they should have still had a visionary notion about its establishment, or if they had, that at such a moment he should have left them under the power of so serious an error.

The words however encourage their hopes; just as he had done in the whole of his discourses from the early promise, Matt. v. 3, to the fuller glory assured them, Luke xxii. 29, 30. He says, the *Father hath put in his own power, the times and seasons* of restoring again the kingdom; then might the Apostles justly conclude, it will again be restored. It is similar to the answer given to the mother of Zebedee's children; that the right and left hand seats in his kingdom, should be given to them for whom it was prepared of his Father, (Matt. xx. 23.)

Infinite wisdom marks these replies. Look back. We stand on the eminence of eighteen centuries. See what those centuries have been. Generation after generation, Apostles, Martyrs, Fathers, Confessors, and Reformers have lived; view their conflicts, labours, sufferings, persecutions, and cruel

deaths. See the rise of Popery and Mahomedanism ; the dark ages ; the reviving and quenching again of light ; the struggles of infant Protestantism, and its subsequent decay, and the spread of infidelity over countries professedly Christian : oh ! had the Apostles been plainly told all this, what needless despondency, what heart sinkings, must have overwhelmed them ; 1800 years of deferred expectation ; 1800 years of Israel's dispersion and the treading down of Jerusalem ; 1800 years to come of the Gentile Monarchies ; with what wisdom this prolonged scene of darkness and sorrow was kept from them, by the very obscurity of the reply ; while they were shewn at the same time, that the kingdom would come at the precise period when a Father, THE FATHER, infinite in wisdom and boundless in love, should see to be best.

Our Lord manifestly designed that his Church should never be without the lively hope of his coming the second time. That his church might have a waiting Spirit, and all the benefits of a preparing, watchful, and hopeful state of mind ; the times of the kingdom were not fully revealed, even when the sealed book was given to the Lamb, and the seals opened by him ; the obscurity is only to be removed at the time of the end, (Dan. xii. 4, 9 ; Rev. xxii. 10.) that thus the Church might ever pour out the fervent prayer, "*Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

Our Lord's kingdom is then yet to be fully established.

It may be well to make this still clearer ; for the power and coming of our Lord to establish such a kingdom, was esteemed of old *a cunningly devised fable*, and has been too much lost sight of.

Our Lord expressly assured his disciples that *some standing with him should not taste of death till they had seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom, and the kingdom of God come with power; and then six days after, he takes Peter, James, and John into a high mountain apart, and is transfigured before them,—his face shines as the sun,—his raiment is white as the light,—Moses and Elias appear with him in glory, and speak of his decease,—his disciples witness these things,—and Peter says, it is good to be here. Then a cloud overshadows them, and a voice is heard from it, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

We have here then the liveliest display of the coming of Christ's Kingdom with power, of which we can at present form a conception. This view is greatly confirmed by the allusion of St. Peter to it. After exhorting Christians to every excellence by the animating motive—*so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*, he tells them, *we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory—This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount; we have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, (or shine out), and the day star arise in your hearts.*

Again, it is not till the seventh angel sounds his trumpet that there are great voices in heaven saying,

the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever, Rev. xi. 15.

As to the full glory of this kingdom we can have but a limited conception. It takes place at the coming of Christ, (Dan. vii. 13, 14, with Matt. xxvi. 64. 2 Tim. iv. 1;) but this could not be at the birth of our Saviour, nor at the destruction of Jerusalem, for there was no judgment in, or destruction of, the Roman empire at that time, Dan. ii. 45; vii. 26. It was to become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, Dan. ii. 35; but we know, that empire subsisted in its glory for centuries after the first coming of Christ. That this kingdom is not the heavenly glory, but one to be established on earth, is clear also from Daniel's plain prediction, *the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.* The expressed hope of the Church is, *Thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth.*

Our Lord Christ is the acknowledged, and only supreme monarch of this Kingdom. What may be the manifestations of his glory we know not. There was a visible appearance of the divine glory in the Holy of Holies under the Jewish Theocracy, and many have supposed that there will be a similar appearance in the administration of this kingdom. The hope of the Christian Dispensation, is however far more excellent than that of the Jewish, *if that which was done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious,* 2 Cor. iii. 7—12. The different

descriptions given of Jerusalem, one in the 40th and following chapters of Ezekiel, and the other in the 21st and 22d of Revelation, have led many to think that there will be two Jerusalems; one heavenly, of which we know *the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*, and the other earthly, of which it is also true, *the name of the city from that day shall be. The Lord is there.* When Nathanael calls our Lord, *the Son of God, and the King of Israel*, our Saviour tells him, *Verily, I say unto you, ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*; this has yet to be fulfilled; and however we may accommodate it to spiritual intercourse with heaven, and spiritual blessings bestowed through Christ, it sets before us a communication between heaven and earth, through the Son of Man, far more glorious than any thing which has yet been realised.

There is therefore a visible and glorious kingdom of Christ, yet to exist on this our earth, with infinitely more holiness, spirituality, and blessedness, than any thing that the world has yet seen. The saints, raised at the coming of Christ, and changed, and made like him, (1 Thess. iv. 15, 16. 1 Cor. xv. 23, 52—54.) shall share its glories and reign with him, (Matt. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 28—30. Rom. viii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. iv. 8. 2 Tim. ii. 12. Rev. iii. 21; v. 10; xx. 1—4).

The thousand years' reign of the saints, is not mentioned to limit their reign for that time; it is perfectly clear that *they shall reign for ever and ever*, Dan. vii. 18; but it is mentioned to shew that at the end of that period, there shall be among the nations then living in the flesh, another outburst of Satan, to himself and

his followers, fatally ruinous, but utterly ineffective to overthrow the kingdom of the saints; and that after that time, he shall be for ever shut up in the lake of fire, and they shall reign in *uninterrupted* glory through eternity. Rev. xxii. 5.

We pretend not to describe what is meant by the language expressive of reigning, or what part the glorified saints will have in the future kingdom of Christ, but it is clear that God has promised that they shall share its blessedness and glories, and holds this out as an animating motive to fidelity. (2 Tim. iv. 8. Rev. ii. 10; iii. 11, 21; v. 10. 1 Cor. ix. 25.) We must not let infidelity, we must not let Satan and the world, rob us of this hope.

God is, *in the ages to come, to shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Jesus Christ.* A participation of the glories of Christ's kingdom is the expressed general expectation of believers in the New Testament; those who are *rich in faith* are, as St. James shews, *heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him*, (James ii. 5). If we are now only heirs, it is clear that we do not possess it.

In its services, the Church of England sets before us this hope, from the first instruction in our catechism, that "we are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" to the last prayer pronounced over our departed bodies,¹ "that it may please thee shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy

¹ The intermediate state of the soul has occupied much of the attention of Christian Divines. The place of departed spirits called in Hebrew *לשון*, in Greek *αἵης*, and in English, Hell, means the invisible receptacle of the dead. Peter says of our Lord, *his soul was not left in hell* (*αἵης*), nor did his flesh see corruption; where

kingdom; that we, and all those departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory."

This too, as has been sufficiently shewn, was the general hope of the Church in the first centuries after Christ. The testimony of Justin Martyr is above all exception on this point, that "as many Christians as were in every respect orthodox, were assured that they who believe in Christ should rise in the flesh, and for the space of a thousand years inhabit Jerusalem, rebuilt, and beautified, and enlarged." Tertullian had the same hope, and he connects this hope with the restoration of the Jews, saying, "It becomes the Christian not to grieve, but to rejoice, with the restoration of the Jew, inasmuch, as all our hope is joined, or united with the remaining expectation of the Jew."¹

Let us then *have*, like Moses, *respect to the recompense of reward*, Heb. xi. 26. Let us, like Abraham,

there is a contrast between his soul being in the invisible state, and his flesh in the grave. The invisible state consists of two parts, a place of rest and blessedness, *paradise* for the righteous, (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4,) and a place of torment for the wicked (Luke xvi. 23.) *Gehenna* is the term used to describe the state of the wicked exclusively, hereafter, Matt. v. 29; xxiii. 15; Mark ix. 43, &c. Respecting the conscious happiness of the spirits of the just between death and the resurrection, such passages as Luke xxiii. 43; Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 8, put it out of all doubt; but of the nature of that happiness, not only the silence of the Scripture, but the very terms of the Hebrew, Greek, and English words, which name it, גֵּהֶנְמָא (a concealed state), *adhs* (from, not seen), *hell*, a Saxon word, meaning hidden or concealed (see Parkhurst), shew us how little we can possibly know of it, and how far short it must be of the promised glory which is so largely described. The opinions of the Fathers on this subject are given in a note on 2 Tim. iv. 8, by Whitby. See also the Investigator, vol. iv. p. 178—180.

¹ See the Bishop of Lincoln's Justin Martyr, p. 104, and Tertullian, page 366, 367.

look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. xi. 10. Let us, like all the Patriarchs confess, that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth ; desire and seek a better country, that is a heavenly, where God has prepared for us a city, Heb. xi. 13—16. They did not receive the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect. To that better thing we are come now in faith, and soon shall come in full enjoyment. Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and then after enumerating the glorious company there assembled, he says, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Let us get hold of the last link of this glorious chain—let us obtain an interest in the blood of sprinkling now—and all the other blessings shall, in the fulness of time be possessed by us. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son ; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.

All is now disjointed, sickly, weak and failing in its designed effect. Remedies multiply wants and defects, *that which is crooked cannot be made straight, that which is wanting cannot be numbered ;* the best planned institutions, the best laws, through the corruption of man and the power of Satan, disappoint our hopes. *The law itself was weak through the flesh.* No one adequately fulfils his relation to another ; at least the conscience of the Christian leads him constantly to condemn himself. Magistrates, ministers, husbands, wives, parents, children, teachers, learners, servants, dependants, all fail in their relative duties in some point or other. Our comforts occasion our

trials, and our very joys bring sorrows. But *the times of the Restitution* (ἀποκαταστάσις) of all things is hastening on; when not by the policy and wisdom of man, but by the effective grace and loving kindness of God our Saviour, they shall be restored to a state of sound health: when the disjointed members shall be made whole, as the withered hand by our Lord, (Matt. xii. 13.) or the blind eyes which were restored by his goodness to perfect sight, (Matt. viii. 25.) And how the sacred writers glow with the bright anticipations of such a period, we may see in Isaiah xi. xxxv. lx., &c. May it only fill our minds in the proportion in which it fills the divine records: and especially may we view it as the time when HOLINESS and SPIRITUALITY shall be every where triumphant on earth, (Zech. xiii. 9; xiv. 20, 21. Joel iii. 17. Isaiah lii. 1; lx. 21. Joel iii. 17.) and as a stimulating MOTIVE to the most zealous and active discharge of all our PRESENT DUTIES.

The kingdom of God now appears so distant as hardly to be of any moment or importance to us, but it will be found to be of a character and magnitude according to the fulness with which it is brought forward in the pages of scripture. Just as a man living upon the earth, thinks of all affecting the earth as great and important, in comparison of the sun, or of the stars; but supposing him to rise gradually above the earth, and approach the sun or the stars; the earth would sink into its real insignificance, and the glory of those greater worlds fill his whole soul. So it is with this kingdom, its supposed distance makes us think it of little moment; but the day is hastening on, when it shall occupy every mind, and engage every heart, and *the knowledge of the glory of*

the Lord fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. It is the property of the scriptures, and faith in them, to bring distant and unseen things before our minds in their just and real proportions.

We would now refresh our minds by attempting to realize the coming of this *kingdom with power*, (Mark ix. 1,) as set before us in varied scriptures. Think of the spirits of the just in the invisible world, even now in their separate state, happy with Christ, but expecting a far completer happiness. View the saints on earth groaning under a body of sin and death; having the first fruits of the spirit, but waiting for deliverance from their many burdens and sorrows: to both these parts of the one family of Christ in heaven and earth, his coming is infinitely desirable. *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* The Lord himself descending from heaven with a shout, in his glorious body shining, as transfigured on the Mount, with a light above the sun; the voice of the archangel speaks; and first *the dead in Christ*, the bodies of the saints, now as seed sown in the earth, lost and covered in its dust, then rise in glory, and join their long separated spirits. Quick as thought, the angels, with eager and joyful haste, catch up those who are alive and remain, and take them with the risen saints to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Immediately each body is transfigured, changed, and fashioned like unto their Lord's glorious body; according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. It was corruptible—it rises incorruptible; it was dishonourable—it rises glorious; it was only a natural body—it rises a spiritual body; it

bore the image of the earthy—in a moment it is changed, and bears the image of the heavenly.

O transporting change! imagine the weak, sickly, frame of a poor believer, burdened with sin, harassed by temptations, worn down by labour, buffeted, scorned, and persecuted, despised and afflicted,—in an instant, delivered out of all, and raised thus beautiful, powerful, and glorious; throwing off at once, all the mortal wrappings which confined him in his earthly house of this tabernacle, and, as in a striking emblem, the chrysalis, bursting forth in the splendours of his new creation to bask in the beams of the *Sun of Righteousness*, and to enjoy all the glories of the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Who can conceive too, our meeting the Lord, and his welcome! Who can realize the purifying, exalting, enrapturing emotions of him to whom the Lord says as he comes into his presence, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* There he presents his redeemed and glorified people *faultless before the presence of the Divine Glory with exceeding joy.* O the unutterable bliss of seeing God as he is, and beholding him, face to face, and knowing as we are known.

Welcomed by the Lord, the glorified saints mingle with the innumerable hosts of heaven, as one in the blessed family above, never to be separated—all being kings and priests unto God and his Father, who shall sit with their Saviour King on his throne. Thus the heirs of God and the joint heirs with Christ, enter on the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Nor merely are they companions of the redeemed. The whole family in heaven is one. O glorious assembly! *the innumerable company of angels; the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven; the spirits of just men made perfect, (united now to their glorified bodies,) and Jesus himself, the Mediator of the New Covenant.—What a gathering, this!*

Among his blessed people the Saviour distributes his rich rewards, *giving to every man according as his work had been; and how infinitely will the lowest reward exceed the largest hopes of his people. All the faithful shall have given to them a crown of life; all that love his appearing, wear the crown of righteousness; the elders who were examples to the flock, receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away: they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.*

Contemplate that innumerable and only truly glorious society. See the righteous, equal to the angels; behold them all *shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; or in the sublime imagery of Revelation—I looked, and lo a lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his father's name written on their foreheads, and I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps, and they sung as it were a new song before the throne.*

But even the inspired language manifestly labours and fails in the closing chapters of Revelation, to convey adequate ideas of the splendours of the *Holy Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, having the*

glory of God and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, the gates of one pearl, the foundations of precious stones, the street pure gold, as it were transparent glass: no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the Lord God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof—no more curse—the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And then we may conceive another part of their blessedness is to be employed in making others blessed, for the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it. This accords with other promises. *We shall reign on the earth. The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*

Christian Reader! let us thirst after this glory. Christian Reader! let us count every thing besides loss—that we may win Christ and be found in him.

The blessedness of the kingdom of God, terminates not merely in the glorified saints being happy in their own glory, and the vision of the Lord; the whole earth, after those purifying judgments which shall come upon it, has the deepest interest in it. It is sublimely represented as waiting for it with earnest longing, *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall be deli-*

vered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Rom. viii. 19—23. Here is a clear distinction between a blessedness to be given in the manifestation of the sons of God, and another blessing in the deliverance of the creation at large from the bondage of corruption. Here comes in then all those glowing promises, which bespangle the firmament of Scripture as the stars do the heavens, of the latter day glory of our Lord's kingdom on earth; the animating hopes set before us in such Psalms as the lxvii. lxxii. xevi. to c., when knowledge, peace, holiness, spirituality and universal happiness shall bless our whole earth. The rich treasures with which the latter chapters of Isaiah are loaded, and the glories which are testified of through the sacred writings, have here ample space for their largest meaning. The whole world will indeed be blessed when under the happy dominion of our Lord and his glorified saints.

What motives are here set before us, Christian Reader, for the greatest exertions in doing good. The future glory is eminently connected with labours for Christ, (Dan. xii. 3; Luke xix. 16—19; 2 Cor. ix. 6,) O what full scope there is in this kingdom for the largest rewards, and what an exciting object for hope and exertion! What motives also for patient endurance of sufferings in this present life! So intimately are sufferings and this glory joined together, that some have thought the Millennial King-

dom was only for *sufferers*, (Rom. viii. 18; Acts xiv. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. vii. 14; xx. 4); but be it for all, (Rev. xi. 18,) the sufferers are those most eminently marked by the Divine Spirit as the heirs of this bliss. May we ever be ready then to rejoice in the cross, (Matt. v. 11, 12.)

When we look at these glories no wonder the work of *salvation* is to be wrought out *with fear and trembling*, (Phil. ii. 12,) no wonder *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force*, (Matt. xi. 12,) and *every man* that really would secure it *presseth into it*, (Luke xvi. 16.) It is a prize worth all the ardour of *the race that is set before us*, (Heb. xii.) and all the struggle of *fighting the good fight of faith*, (1 Tim. vi. 12.) It is worth parting with *the eye, the hand, or the foot*, (Matt. xviii. 8, 9,) or *even life itself*, (Luke xiv. 26; Rev. xii. 11,) rather than *forfeit our lot at the end of the days* (Dan. xii. 13,) in the heavenly kingdom, and inheritance. The Lord inspire all our hearts with a noble ardour and thirst after this as our best aim, our proper rest, our eternal riches, glory, and blessedness; so that for the sake of this we may willingly go through every previous sacrifice.

On the review of all these things, may our hearts be led to offer up with fervency of desire, that prayer, *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

CHAPTER XIII.

THE APPLICATION OF PROMISES IN THE PROPHECIES
TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE Prophetic writings should be carefully read, not merely for the future events which they foretell, but as everywhere bearing the rich treasures of divine truth; and furnishing noble displays of the glory of God and clear manifestations of the way of salvation, of the duties of the creature, and of his dependance on the Creator. They are full of deep doctrines; sweet promises; holy precepts; and heart-stirring motives to follow the will and to live to the praise of the great and eternal Jehovah. Their holiness speaks their divinity, even before their fulfilment has made it a demonstration; their present usefulness declares the wisdom and loving-kindness of the Lord, even before their accomplishment has displayed his Omniscient eye, his omnipotent arm; his perfect equity, and boundless grace.

Prophecy is like a richly freighted vessel returning from a distant land, and conveying those on board in safety to their home. It contains all needful *provision* and comfort for the use of the crew during

the whole length of voyage, and besides this, it has a still more valuable cargo to be enjoyed by the owners, when all the perils of the sea, when all its storms and tempests have been passed through. Though the passengers may be distant from their own land, they are gradually approaching nearer and nearer, and while they are sailing day and night homewards, every present want is supplied by the abundant stores which the vessel contains for their use : but the chief riches of the vessel are reserved for the end of the voyage. Let us look then now for a moment at the daily provision made for our immediate and personal wants.

In the Prophecies of the Old Testament are contained promises of the richest spiritual blessings. These belong to every Christian, through faith in Jesus, and thus have a fulfilment in reference to Christian believers, beyond their first fulfilment in reference to Israel and Judah, the children of Abraham, after the flesh.

The promises at any time made to the Church of God, composed of true believers, belong to them in similar circumstances at all times. They display the will of Him who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, and who has given and revealed these promises as revealing his mind towards his people, and for the benefit of the Church at large. The promises of spiritual blessings made originally to the Old Testament Church, are now properly applied to, and really inherited by the Christian Church, and will only be inherited by any as they believe in Jesus Christ.

This is so important a part of divine truth, that it calls for particular proof and illustration.

The Jews derive their right to the promises of the blessings of the Messiah from the covenant made with Abraham : that covenant included promises that he should be a father of many nations ; that his seed should be multiplied *as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore* ; and that in his seed *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*. Abraham was a father of many nations, literally ; but the Apostle shews in the 4th of Romans, that he is the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised. There is a seed not only which is of the law, but that also which is of the faith of our father Abraham, as it is written, *I have made thee a father of many nations*, Rom. iv. 11—16. These are the children of the promise, as well as the children of the flesh,¹ Rom. ix. 8.

Jesus Christ is the uniting corner stone of the Jewish and Gentile churches, *who hath made both one—an holy temple in the Lord*, Ephes. ii. 11—22. He was the promised seed of Abraham in the fullest sense, Gal. iii. 16. By faith in him we are united to him, and become one with him ; and in this way alone are either Jews or Gentiles true children of Abraham, Gal. iii. 25—29. Rom. ix. 6—8.

The Apostle speaks to the Hebrews of the superior privileges of the Christian Dispensation in these terms—*Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city*

¹ Bishop Hall uses far too strong language. He says, "Whosoever shall have duly digested this distinction, will easily find how wild a paradox it is to tie those frequent and large promises of the prophets made to Judah, Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem, to a carnal literality of sense, and to make account of their accomplishment accordingly, which were never otherwise than spiritually meant." We may take all the benefit of promises of spiritual blessings, and still know that the prophecy has a yet more extended literal interpretation, and that pregnant also with far more extended spiritual blessings.

of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ; plainly intimating, as the context sufficiently shows, that the Gentile Christians partook of the privileges of Mount Zion, and the Jerusalem on which the blessing of God rested. St. Paul tells us, *there is a Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all*, in contradistinction from *the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children*, Gal. iv. 25, 26. It is evident that the Apostle includes in the Jerusalem which is above, (typified by Sarah) the whole church which has its origin from heaven, is espoused to Christ, and is the mother of all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are born of the Spirit by means of the word and ordinances which are dispensed in the church. It is plain, therefore, that following the Apostle, we are warranted in considering the promises of spiritual blessings to be conferred on Jerusalem, as belonging to the universal church of Christ.

Our Lord assured the Jews, that those who do not *the works of Abraham* are not the true *children of Abraham*, though lineally descended from him, John viii. 39.

The Apostle shews at length, in Rom. iv, ix, x, xi, and Gal. iii, iv, that those who had not Abraham's faith had no interest in the spiritual blessings which he obtained. He shews that the promises of the Old Testament belong only to the true church, and will only be realized to each true believer. While he excludes the literal Israel, not believing in Christ, (Rom. ix. 7, 8, 31 ; xi. 7.) he expressly says to the Gentiles, *If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*, Gal. iii. 29. See also Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; iv. 11, 16 ; ix. 6—8. 2 Cor.

i. 20. Gal. iii. 14, 26—28; iv. 25, 26. Eph. ii. 1 Peter ii. 9.

In this way the Apostles continually use the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. The oath sworn to Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) is applied to all believers, the heirs of promise, Heb. vi. 13—20. The promise given to Israel, (Deut. xxxi. 6,) *he will not fail thee nor forsake thee*, and repeated to Joshua, (Josh. i. 5,) the Apostle quotes (Heb. xiii. 5, 6,) as belonging to believers in general. Is it not clear, therefore, from the Apostle's application of the promise, that believers under the Christian Dispensation may rely on the promises made to the faithful under the Jewish? Jerusalem, Zion, and in fact the whole Mosaic Dispensation, were in some important respects types of the spiritual church of Christ, and we may be well assured that the promises and prophecies which concern the types have a yet more important reference to the antitype. Nor can we suppose that many spiritual promises belong to the inferior or antiquated dispensation, from which believers under *the better covenant established upon better promises*, are altogether excluded.

The prophecies in the 2d of Joel are quoted by St. Peter in the first instance as fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, in the gifts of the Spirit to the Jewish church: while a promise there mentioned is also stated by St. Paul as belonging to all believers. Rom. x. 13.

The prophecy in Isaiah liv. 1, which, at first sight, might appear simply to belong to Judah, is thus applied by St. Paul in the Galatians, (iv. 26—28) to the whole church of Christ—*Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all: for it is*

written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth, and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, (that is, who believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile), as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.

We might think that Hosea i. 10, and ii. 23, applied only to Israel; but the Apostle applies them more extensively—to us whom he hath called; not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, as he saith in Hosea, *I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.* Rom. ix. 24—26.

We are not here contending against a further fulfilment of such prophecies, but making as clear and as manifest as we can, the all-important point of the propriety of their application to Christians. Supposing that these are prophecies which may be yet more literally and extensively fulfilled in a primary sense respecting the Jewish nation, yet the promises which they contain are every day fulfilled to real Christians, and are justly applied to them. Thus the promises of the new covenant in the prophecy contained in the 30th and 31st of Jeremiah, are applied by the Apostle in the 8th of Hebrews to believers under the Christian dispensation, and belong to all real Christians.

These examples of the New Testament application of the Old Testament prophecy, must not be overlooked when we speak of any future literal accomplishment respecting the Jews.

In this general application of the sacred writings,

there is *neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free ; but Christ is all and in all ;* (Col. iii. 11.) in this general view, *all scripture—is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

The Bible, thus remarkably adapts itself to the wants of mankind, and becomes the statute book and the great charter of salvation for the whole world. Thus the accumulating and enriching blessings of the various divine dispensations belong to every living soul believing in Jesus Christ, and shall, in the fulness of time, flow to, pervade, and bless every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue. Some have endeavoured to shew that no such passages as we have quoted, ought to be applied to the Christian church, except where we have the authority of Christ and his Apostles ; but surely the way in which they apply the prophecies is rather given as an example of the way in which we may do so.

It strengthens these considerations when we remember that the Scriptures speak so much of the Jewish Dispensation as being of a typical character, and prefiguring the Christian. Heb. viii. 5 ; ix. 9 ; x. 1 ; 1 Cor. x. 1—11. It was only temporary and preparatory to the full establishment of a more permanent system. Heb. viii. In the Epistle peculiarly addressed to the Jewish nation, the Apostle, instead of giving any intimation of a re-establishment of their particular Dispensation shews that it was to be removed, that that immoveable kingdom, which he calls *those things which cannot be shaken, may remain.* Heb. xii. 26—28.

Having given this scriptural illustration of the subject, many human authorities need not be added.

Mr. Lowth's remark in his preface to the commentary is perfectly just—"All the privileges appropriated to the Jews in the Old Testament, as God's peculiar people do, in a more eminent manner, appertain to the Church of Christ, which is the true kingdom of God, the Jerusalem coming down from heaven, of which the earthly Jerusalem and the Temple there, was only a type and figure."

This view of the subject is important to be thus fully established, as it not only respects the full interpretation of prophecy, but the right of Christians to all the promises of the Old Testament. Hereby *all the promises of God, in Christ are yea, and in him, amen: unto the glory of God by us.*

In this view, the Psalms are appointed by the Church of England to assist the daily devotions of her worshippers. Bishop Horne's introduction to his commentary forcibly shews the truth and solidity of this mode of interpretation; and the commentary itself, without defending every particular, in general wisely and beautifully illustrates and exemplifies it.

It shows how judiciously and how piously, and with what edification, the promises of the Old Testament may be thus expounded, and how easily and naturally they express the devout feelings of the Christian believer.¹

¹ It may be interesting to the reader to see the way in which the above view is, in the main, confirmed by different writers; though we allow that several of the quotations go much too far, and would exclude the literal interpretation of prophecy altogether. Investigation and events have thrown a light around prophecy, which these authors did not possess in their day, and would now thankfully improve. Augustine shews, in his Treatise on the City of God, (Book 17. chap. iii.) that the promises concern partly the bond-woman bringing forth into bondage, that is, the earthly Jerusalem, and partly the free city of God, the true Jerusalem, eternal and heavenly, whose children are pilgrims on earth in the way of God's word: and there are some which

The wisdom of God is thus wonderfully seen in so foretelling future events, that while they confirm the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and answer other important ends, as PREDICTIONS, accomplished or

belong to both, properly to the bond-woman, and figuratively to the free; for the prophets have a triple meaning in their prophecies, some concerning the earthly Jerusalem, some the heavenly, and some both. As I think it a great error in some to hold no relation to things done in the Scripture more than mere historical, so do I hold it a great boldness in them that bind all relations of Scripture unto allegorical reference, and therefore I avouch the meaning in Scripture to be triple, and not two-fold only."

Bishop Hall, writing against those who had, in his days, carnal notions of a Millennium, speaks in much too sweeping a way; he says, "their general fault is that they put a merely literal construction upon the prophecies, which the Holy Ghost intended only to be spiritually understood. Hence it is that those frequent predictions which we meet in every page of the prophets concerning the kingdom of Christ, the re-edifying of the Jewish cities, the pomp and magnificence of restored Israel, their large privileges, and marvellous achievements, are altogether drawn to a gross, corporal, and syllabical sense; which the judgment of the whole Christian Church, seconded by the event, hath upon good grounds, ever construed, not of the letter but of the spirit. The truth is, these prophecies have their reference either to God's merciful dealings with Jerusalem on their return from the Babylonish captivity; or by an usual allegory, express his gracious purposes to the Church under the Gospel." See Bishop Hall's Revelation Unrevealed.¹

Dr. Owen says on this subject, "Those promises which we find recorded concerning Sion, Jerusalem, the seed of Abraham, Jacob, Israel, respect the Elect of God called to the faith of Abraham, and worshipping God according to his appointment, of what people or nation soever they be." See Dr. Owen on the Hebrews, Exercitations vi. and xviii.

Mr. Lowth, the author of the Commentary, observes, in his directions for reading the Scriptures,—“A particular, very observable in those prophecies which relate to the times of the Messiah, is the mystical sense of several passages in them contained under the literal, of which we may assign several examples. As (1.) When the prophets describe him under such characters as have a more immediate aspect upon some eminent person in or near their own times. 2 Sam. vii. 14; Psalm ii. 6, 7; xlv. and lxxii; lxxix. 26, 27; Haggai ii. 23; Zech. vi. 11, 12. (2) When they represent the redemption of mankind which he was to accomplish by such expressions as do in their first and pri-

¹ The Author, as it will be seen, by no means concurs in the restricted view of Bishop Hall.

accomplishing; they cheer and comfort every individual believer as PROMISES in which he has a personal interest.

At the same time, the way in which the promises are assured to Christians, furnishes a most tender

many sense allude to some temporal deliverance which God had vouchsafed, (Psalm lxxviii. 22, 23.) or would vouchsafe to their own nation. Isaiah xl. 3, &c; xlix. 8, &c; lii. 7, &c; lx. 1, &c. Or lastly, when they set forth the benefits of the Gospel by phrases taken from the forms of divine worship prescribed by their law." Isaiah lx. 6, 7; lxvi. 23; Zech. xiv. 16, 20.

He further shews, that "these providential congruities between the times of the Old and New Testament, as a learned writer styles them, do very much confirm the authority of both Testaments. From hence we learn that the Scriptures comprehend one entire scene of Providence, which reaches from one end of the world to the other: and that God, who is the beginning and end of all things, by various steps and degrees pursues one great design, viz. the setting up the kingdom of his Son, through the several ages of the world, and will still carry it on by such measures as seem best to his infinite wisdom, till the great day of the consummation of all things. Such a gradual opening of this wonderful scene of Providence is a new argument of that infinite wisdom which contrived it, and so fully justifies this mystical way of propounding it."

Bishop Lowth also remarks in his Lectures, that, "In the sacred rites of the Hebrews, things, places, times, offices, and such like, sustain as it were a double character, the one proper or literal, the other allegorical; and in their writings these subjects are sometimes treated of in such a manner as to relate either to the one sense or the other singly, or to both united. For instance, a composition may treat of David, of Solomon, of Jerusalem, so as to be understood to relate simply either to the city itself and its monarchs, or else to those objects which in the sacred allegory of the Jewish religion are denoted by that city, and by those monarchs; or the mind of the author may embrace both objects at once, so that the very words which express the one, in the plain, proper, historical, and commonly received sense, may typify the other in the sacred, interior, and prophetic sense." He afterwards illustrates this by a particular consideration of the 2nd and 72nd Psalm.

Bishop Hurd has many valuable remarks on this subject. He says, "The same oracles which attest the first coming of Christ, as if impatient to be confined to so narrow bounds, overflow as it were into the future, and expatiate on the principal facts of his second coming. By this Divine artifice, if I may so speak, the two dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian, are closely tied together, or rather compacted together, into one harmonious system. The

motive for the kindest consideration of the Jews. We can claim none of the promises of the Old Testament without being reminded of the lost sheep of Israel, and of our connection with their father Abraham as the channel by which the blessings flow to us. With such views, how inexcusable is contempt of, or indifference to the Jews! *Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

events which both these prophetic schemes point out, are so distributed through all time, as to furnish successively to the several ages of the world the means of a fresh and still growing conviction."

Bishop Horne's introduction to his Commentary on the Psalms, as noticed above, dwells at considerable length on this mode of interpretation. He says, "The writers of the New Testament shew us that there is another Israel of God, other children of Abraham and heirs of the promise, another circumcision; another Egypt from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness through which they journey; other bread from heaven for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; and another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain and possess for ever."

It is allowed on all hands, that wisdom is needful in such an application of prophecy, and that many have carried it too far. The literal meaning should ever be first attained, where the sacred text will evidently bear a literal sense. It has pleased the Holy Spirit also to reveal things in a variety of different ways. "Sometimes," says Bishop Lowth, "the obvious or literal sense is so prominent and conspicuous, both in the words and sentiments, that the remote or figurative sense is scarcely permitted to glimmer through it. On the other hand, and that more frequently, the figurative sense is found to beam forth with so much perspicuity and lustre, that the literal sense is quite cast into a shade, or becomes indiscernible." Let us not lean on our own or any other man's wisdom, so much as upon the constant teaching of the Holy Ghost and comparing Scripture with Scripture.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHECIES.

It has been shewn that the Christian is entitled to apply to himself the promises of spiritual blessings made to the Jews of old. They are to him *all yea and amen in Christ Jesus*.

But this has led to a great mistake in the interpretation of the Old Testament Prophecies—(a mistake in which the Author long partook,) of confining their meaning simply to the Christian Church, and not taking their literal application to the Jewish Nation, in an enlarged fulfilment which, we have so much scriptural reason to expect, will take place hereafter.

St. Paul, however, explicitly applies Isa. lix. 20 to a future fulfilment (Rom. xi. 26); Isa. xxv. 8, to the time of the resurrection (1Cor. xv. 54;) and Hag. ii. 6, to a future shaking of the heavens and the earth. (Heb. xii. 26); and thereby distinctly teaches us that there will be a future fulfilment of the passages. There are statements in the prophecies that cannot without the greatest force upon words, be applied at all spiritually, or be viewed as already literally fulfil-

led, and which we may therefore expect will have a literal accomplishment hereafter.¹

The right combination of the literal interpretation of a Prophecy, as to its past and future fulfilment, with the present personal application of its promises to the believer's individual use ; and the right union of the interpretation of the Prediction by historical facts, with its personal use in the way of comfort, example, warning, and direction, give us the full advantage of the prophetic word. These things have been too much disjoined.² Having therefore now considered the practical application of the promises to ourselves, we must also notice the literal interpretation of the prophecies as they concern more immediately those of whom they speak.

The privileges and blessings of Christians under the Gospel are truly great, and the present enjoyment of spiritual mercies of incalculable value ; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus*, may every Christian say ; but the inheritance to which we are predestined is yet to come. We are now sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is, however, only the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory. Our present privileges still leave us groaning within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom. viii. 23 ; 2 Cor. v. 4.)

This may teach us, that any application of the

¹ See Mr. Platt's Thoughts on Old Testament Prophecies.

² On the Psalms, Allix, Horsley, and Fry, give us their views of the Prophetical meaning. Amesius in Psalmos, Dickson, and Horne, give us their spiritual, practical, and devotional use ; but both views are needful to attain the full benefit of the Psalms.

glorious prophecies of the Old Testament to the Church now Militant, though the Jews are scattered over the earth, and the witnesses prophecy in sackcloth, must be vastly short of their full meaning; they belong to Christians, indeed, in such foretastes and earnestings as the Divine Spirit may now impart, and in the joyful anticipation of Christian hope; but not in the present possession and enjoyment of the predicted glories. We might here return Bishop Hall's remark, varying the application, "to tie those frequent and large promises" to a mere spirituality of sense, which Christians have never yet enjoyed, is limiting the Divine Promises where we have no right to do it. There may be a much larger literal fulfilment, as well as more extended spiritual blessings in the future state of the Church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles dwelling on earth, and in the bliss of the glorified saints, dwelling with Christ their Lord in the heavenly Jerusalem. *The Scriptures cannot be broken*, (John x. 35.) should be to us an axiom in their interpretation. *Heaven and earth shall pass, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled*. (Matt. v. 18; xxiv. 35.) However we may, for illustration, accommodate them to the Christian Church, their real meaning as prophecies, has not, as far as we can judge, had an adequate fulfilment in events that have yet taken place, and therefore we may consider that they are to be realised in a more blessed state than this world has ever yet witnessed.

Nor let any imagine that the glow of Eastern imagery, and poetic imagination, led the prophets to give what might have appeared, at first sight, exaggerated views of the state of the Church of Christ,

but are not really so. The Parables of our Lord, and the predictions of the book of Revelation, showing us the trials of the church and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, may guard us against such a perversion; and the closing chapters of that book, may lead us to a fuller view of the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is also a most unworthy idea of the words of the Divine Spirit, to think that they are swelled out beyond the just meaning; *God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think*; and it is perfectly clear that the promises to the Patriarchs were not realized to them individually, and yet wait for their full accomplishment. Acts vii. 4, 5: Heb. xi. 8—16, 39, 40.

It is necessary to a consistent interpretation, and it throws great light on the Old Testament predictions, and on the future purposes of God, to take them first, and generally, in their plain, literal, and obvious meaning:—Zion meaning Zion—Judah meaning Judah—Israel meaning Israel—and Jerusalem meaning Jerusalem. Mark how far they were accomplished when Christ first came, (as in Isa. liii.; Daniel ix. 25, 26), and then consider what has yet been unaccomplished, and may be realised in the future restoration of the Jews. Let us interpret the unfulfilled on the same principle and in the same literal way as we do the fulfilled.

May we not, (the author must include himself,) have perverted the Scriptures; have wronged the Jews; have obscured the future glorious kingdom of Christ; have misdirected the Church, and hidden from it the judgments yet to come on the ungodly, by attempting to spiritualize that which God intended not to be spiritualized, but to be literally understood?

It is allowed that there is much figurative and symbolical language in the Scriptures, and especially in the prophetical writings. Some prophecies are plain and literal, and others symbolical; it should be considered therefore, whether the prophecies be symbolical, such as are Daniel ii. and vii., and much of the book of Revelation; or simple and literal as many prophecies in Isaiah. Figurative language in the symbolical prophecies is frequently "taken from the analogy between the world natural, and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic."¹ The rules which Sir Isaac Newton gives, and the examples of Daubuz, on the prophetic language are valuable, though probably no rules of interpretation yet fixed on this point are altogether unexceptionable. Much scriptural and heavenly wisdom is requisite for fully understanding the right interpretation of the language of the varied prophecies. Dan. xii. 4, 8—10.

A difference between a symbol and a figure may be noticed. All language is full of figures which convey the meaning quite as accurately as plain expressions, and much more forcibly. A symbol is an emblematical or allegorical sign; a purposely designed picture, using things universally known, to convey knowledge to our minds; and thus concealing and yet illustrating; hiding from the careless, and yet speaking more explicitly than words, which have a variable meaning, and could not be so exactly translated do, to the diligent searcher of Scripture. The meaning of symbols is, however, made yet clearer by literal explanations. Thus we are informed, that *Candlesticks* mean *Churches*, Rev. i. 20. *The woman* means *the great city which reigneth over*

¹ See Sir I. Newton on Daniel, chap. ii.

the kings of the earth, (Rev. xvii. 18); the *Dragon and Old Serpent* means *the Devil and Satan*, Rev. xx. 2.

The distinction between symbolical and literal prophecies may be distinctly seen in those of DANIEL. The first part of the prophecies, chap. ii. from 31—35, is symbolical; then comes the literal explanation, verse 36—45. The first part of ch. vii. (verse 1—14,) is chiefly symbolical, the latter part, verse 15—27, is the literal explanation. The eleventh chapter is literal prophecy, called *the scripture of truth*, (Dan. x. 21,) *the truth*, (Dan. xii. 2,) in opposition to figure and symbol. From the latter part of this remarkable prophecy, many expect a future developement of ANTICHRIST. Mr. Faber considers that the Antichrist predicted by St. John, is the same enemy as the wilful king in Daniel, (chap. xi.) and he views the actions of Antichrist as mainly constituting the third woe, (Rev. xi.) the fulfilment of which he considers as commencing with the French Revolution. The Author cannot see that these predictions refer only to that which is supposed to be emphatically and exclusively the Antichrist, with any thing of confidence of mind. Many particulars of the prophecy in Daniel xi. have had a remarkable fulfilment already in the history of the Saracens and the Turks, as developed by Brightman, in his Exposition of Dan. xi., Mede, Newton, Keith, &c.; the prophecy is not, however, yet fully accomplished, and that which remains unfulfilled will make the whole more clear. The change in the description of the beast, (Rev. xvii. compared with Rev. xiii.) leads us to expect that change in the Roman Empire before its destruction, which will more remarkably

manifest the workings of every Antichrist previous to the final overthrow of Christ's enemies.

The symbolical character of much of the chief book of Prophecies in the New Testament, THE REVELATION, is obvious. It is full also of literal and plain expressions. The application of expressions, originally adapted to the Jewish Dispensation, throughout the apostolic writings, to the use of the Christian Church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, and their enlarged meaning, in this use, has been sufficiently explained and justified.¹ The Revelation has many Jewish ideas, characters, and expressions, but they are applicable to the Gentile Christian Churches, and fulfilled in their history. The term *Babylon* is so explained in the Book, and, by the course of events, that it cannot be applied to the literal Babylon; nor the term *Jerusalem*, merely to the literal Jerusalem; nor the term *Jew* to the literal Jew only, (Rev. ii. 9; Rom. ii. 28, 29); nor the *Lamb slain*, to the literal lamb sacrificed in the temple, (Rev. v. 6); nor the golden vials full of odours, (Rev. v. 8,) to the incense offered in the temple. This consideration is decisive in the Author's mind, to shew that events of the Christian Church may fulfil the Apocalypse, and that we need not, and ought not, because no literal fulfilment has yet taken place, to imagine that these may not have been a fulfilment of the symbols, after the manner in which Protestants generally concur, though they may not yet clearly see or fully agree in particular application. It is generally admitted, that the Jews are included in the later triumphs of the Church foretold

¹ See Mendham's *Clavis Apostolica* for many useful remarks on the New Testament application of Old Testament language.

in this book: but it would be here a false literalness to apply words taken from the Jewish Dispensation, merely literally, or exclusively to the Jews.¹

It strengthens these considerations when we remember that the four beasts of Daniel, (ch. vii.) refer to the four universal kingdoms of the earth, and it is generally admitted both by Protestants and Romanists, that the fourth beast of Daniel is the same as the beast described by St. John, and that both point out the Roman Empire. Cressener shews this at length in the fourteen different particulars, and concludes, "it is therefore unquestionable, that the fourth beast in Daniel is the same with the beast in the Revelations." He brings extracts from the Romanists, Viega, Alcala, Malvenda, and Ribera, as concurring in this view.² The learned Romanist, Sylviera, identifies too the beast of Revelation with that of Daniel, and brings forward many Romanists and Fathers to support this interpretation.³

Mede thus states his view: "I conceive Daniel to be a contracted Apocalypse, and the Apocalypse Daniel explicate, in that where both treat about the same subject, namely, what was revealed to Daniel concerning the fourth kingdom, but summarily and in gross, was showed to John particularly, with the distinction and order of the several fates and circumstances which were to betide and accompany the same. And that therefore Daniel's prophecy is not

¹ In this view the radical defect of Brown's "The Jew, the Master-Key of the Revelation," applying it mainly to the Jews, and of Mr. Burgh's Revelation unfulfilled, may be seen. See the Review of Mr. Burgh's book in the Dublin Christian Herald, vol. iii. p. 270.

² See Cressener's Demonstration, p. 82—89; see also p. 8, 9.

³ See his work on the Apocalypse, vol. ii. p. 121, &c.

terminated with the first, but reacheth to the second coming of Christ, as appears by that description of the glorious coming, and of the great judgment, (Daniel vii.) and his prophecy of the resurrection, (chap. xii.) This has been the constant tradition of the Church, from the Apostle's days to this last age, and was of the Church of the Jews before, and at our Saviour's time. And if the Apostles had ever taught the Church otherwise, it could never have been so fully forgotten." ¹

Sir Isaac Newton also says—"the Apocalypse of St. John is written in the same style as the prophecies of Daniel, and has the same relation to them which they have one to another; so that all of them together make one complete prophecy, and an interpretation thereof. The prophecy is distinguished into seven successive parts by the opening of the seven seals of the Book which Daniel was commanded to seal up, (Daniel xii. 4, 9.) and hence it is called the Apocalypse or Revelation of Jesus Christ." ²

But during that fourth Empire, the Jews, though there be a *remnant*, are, as a *people, fallen, and diminished, cast away, and broken off*, Rom. xi. 11—18, that the Gentiles might be *grafted in, reconciled, enriched and saved*; a *people being taken out of them for the name of God, at the Saviour's return he will build again the Tabernacle of David*, but not till then. Acts xv. 14—16.

The predictions of Daniel (chap. ii. and vii.) and of St. John, relating to the times of the Gentiles. St. John takes up that part of Daniel's predictions,

¹ See his Works, p. 787.

² See Newton's Observations, p. 254.

which was left unaccomplished, and gives a more minute and full detail,¹ for the use of those who were *God's servants* in general, and assuring them *the things would shortly come to pass*. To apply then the prophecies of Revelation mainly to the Jews, is to carry literal interpretation too far, and to go on a fundamentally erroneous principle. To consider also the Revelation as wholly unfulfilled, is to suppose nothing taking place of things which were said shortly to come to pass, and to leave the servants of God, for 1,800 years, without the light of particular prophecy. The painful fact of many differences, or mistakes, of interpreters, will not remove an improbability which must be considered great. Let us remember, also, the explicit statements of the value of prophecy, as a light to the Church; (Amos iii. 7 : John xv. 15; 2 Peter i. 19) and the large concurrence of laborious, patient, and deeply learned, and pious Protestants; and the unquestionable fact that one grand instrument of effecting the blessed Reformation, was the popular conviction that Popery was the Man of Sin, and Papal Rome the Babylon of Revelation. But for this interpretation of Prophecy, we might still have been in the darkness and infatuation of that awful perversion of the Gospel. The importance of chronological prophecy to aid us now in preparedness for the day of Christ, is great, and the general interpretation has been the chief means of strengthening and confirming, if not of exciting attention to this.

An wholly unfulfilled Revelation leaves us without any guide on this most important point. A vast variety of puzzling as well as important questions

¹ See Mr. Habershon's Work for the illustration of this, p. 6 and 7

may be asked ; and very many difficulties presented quite overwhelming at first sight. Bishop Newton puts it, " folly " (or I would say ingenuity) " may ask more questions than wisdom can answer." This is the case with every subject. Even with those prophecies that have been obviously, and in a large part fulfilled, there are sentences which have not apparently been realized, and which we therefore conclude, yet wait for their fulfilment, or for farther light respecting it. Difficulties do not overturn a system of interpretation ; the human intellect is strong to pull down, but weak to see God's will, and the fulfilling of his purposes, and to build up his truth. This is not stated as an objection to the pointing out of difficulties, but as a reason why, though there are real difficulties, and we cannot see the whole of the case, we should not on that account disregard and set aside a system of interpretation which in many of the most important particulars, meets the terms of the prophecy, and allows subsequent events that may complete the whole. The course of investigation may, and the course of time will, assuredly, clear up all the difficulties of God's word ? and *we shall know as we are known*. Nor can we expect perfectly to comprehend any part of divine truth, till *that which is perfect is come*.

It may serve very much to weaken the force of objections respecting difficulties, to look at similar difficulties in prophecies which our Lord and his Apostles notice as fulfilling in their day, and the obscurities attaching to them. Compare for instance the references in Matthew with the Old Testament Prophecies, and see whether there be not scope for an able mind to make difficulties. Far also, is uni-

versal consent from being a necessary test of truth. Some of the Jews, enlightened by prophecy, (Luke ii. 25, 38) cordially received Christ; but the great body of the Jewish nation rejected our Divine Lord, (Acts xiii. 37) because they shut their eyes to predictions which had real difficulties, but still light enough to guide them, and which we are assured were actually fulfilled. May those, then, who are staggered at the varieties of opinion, and the difficulties in the Protestant interpretation of the Revelation, duly weigh this! Even the most attached disciples of our Lord were long in understanding the prophecies that were fulfilling before their eyes. (Luke xxiv. 21.) A prophecy may be fulfilled, though professing and even real servants of Christ, differ about it, and do not think that it has been accomplished. If we wait till all are agreed, before we are influenced by prophetic truths, we must wait till the day of grace be passed, and Christ be come in his glory.

It appears to the Author that most of the materials of a true interpretation of the Apocalypse have been gathered together by those who have trodden in the steps of Mede; but he feels doubtful whether these materials have yet (valuable as the writings of Vitringa, Cressener, Newton, Woodhouse, Faber, Cuninghame, &c. are,) been so selected and classified, as to furnish that which will be found to be exactly true in the end. But let none wait for farther light before they are influenced by them to preparation for our Lord's coming. Whether it may please the Lord, or not, to give to any of his servants before his coming, the true interpretation of the whole, who can tell? More understanding, however, in the last days, is expressly promised to the wise,

(Dan. xii. 10;) and enough is clear to answer one great end of prophecy, and impress upon the whole church the solemn duty of diligent preparation for, and lively expectation of the day of Christ. When that glorious Being who alone *was found worthy* in heaven and earth, *to take the book and open the seals thereof*, returns again, he will unfold all its difficulties in their full accomplishment, and realise his own promise: *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*. As the seals of the symbolic book was opened by him to be a present light to the church militant in a dark world: so its accomplishment may be opened by him to display his full glory to the church triumphant in the heavenly kingdom.

The tendency of the new view of an Apocalypse unfulfilled, is to throw men off from a state of watchfulness and readiness for our Lord's coming. If once men can be brought to think the great book of prophecy of our Lord's coming yet to be unaccomplished, a vast variety of events have then previously to take place. It has the same effect as a spiritual coming before the Millennium, making it more difficult to realize the coming *as a thief* and *as a snare*, to us at the present time; and so impracticable, to be always in a watching and waiting spirit for that blessed, though most tremendous day.

The remarkable PROPHECY OF OUR LORD, (recorded Mat. xxiv. and xxv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi.) is almost wholly literal, with however, some mixture of symbolic expressions. That this prediction cannot throughout be intended to point out the destruction of Jerusalem, (as Bishop Newton and many others have imagined,) though generally also considering it typical of Christ's second

coming, Bishop Horsley has sufficiently shewn in his sermons upon it. That the expression "this generation shall not pass till all be fulfilled," need not be so limited, has been proved in various ways.¹ It has, I think, been satisfactorily shewn that *γενεα*, may properly be rendered *nation*, and the expression be parallel to Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. The strain put upon scripture is excessive to make the prediction wholly refer to the destruction of Jerusalem,—and perfectly needless. The order of expressions in St. Luke, shews us that the signs in the sun shall be after *Jerusalem shall be trodden of the Gentiles*, and at the close of the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles, Luke xxi. 24, 25. (See Campbell's notes on this passage,) and leads us thus to see that St. Matthew's, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*, refers to

¹ See Mede, p. 752; Horsley's Sermons, Investigator, vol. i. 53. 376; Cuninghame, p. 312. The remarks of Maldonatus, an able Romanist, upon it are curious, and to this effect: "The more recent interpreters of the heretics, (i. e. Protestants,) and even of some Catholics who are wont to follow them too much, expound this "age" as if the sense were, before that age of men who then lived, had passed away, Jerusalem would be destroyed. There were also formerly, most ancient authors who so explained it, but Origen calls them simple men; and truly this will not appear to be the sense when we oppose to it another better sense. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, &c. interpret it a generation of faithful men, as if Christ said, although so many and such great calamities should come, yet the Church should not perish till the end of the world; but Jerome understands the generation of all men as if our Lord said,—before the human race passed away, all the things which he had predicted, would happen. To me in this place, all the world seems to be called generation, as the whole begotten—as elsewhere the creature is called because it is all the created; therefore the true sense appears to be, that so certain were the things which Christ predicted, that the world should not perish before they happened. This is manifestly to be collected from the following sentence, *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, &c.; therefore they who translate age for "generation," do injury to the sentence." The opinions of Chrysostom, Theophylact, &c. are calculated to shew how little Greek writers felt that the original Greek word confined the meaning to a living generation.

the expiration of the times of the Gentiles, and the tribulation to an extended period, with indeed a paroxysm at its beginning, (Mat. xxiv. 21,) and at its close, (Dan. xii. 1.) The expressions in Luke xxi. 25, 26, the *signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth,—distress of nations*, (εθνων, Gentiles,) *with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth*, (οικουμενη), are larger than to be limited to the land of Judea. The *lifting up of the head*, (Luke xxi. 28) is inconsistent with the state of Jews or Christians, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the mixture of figurative and literal expressions is so evident in Luke xxi. 25, 26, as may, at least, caution us against too confidently expecting a literal fulfilment of signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and being too positive that these parts of this truly magnificent prophecy, reaching from the first to the second coming, bearing as they do the evident appearance of a mixture of literal and of symbolical expressions, are only to be literally realised. We may thus be waiting for tokens of our Saviour's coming, which are not really promised.

This wonderful prophecy sets before us with the plainness of history, the destruction of Jerusalem, its lengthened desolation, the prolonged tribulation of the Jews; the false teachers that should arise in the Christian Church; the revolutions preceding the coming of Christ, his sudden coming, the mourning of all the tribes of the earth, and the gathering together of his people, and practically improves the solemn subject by many PRACTICAL LESSONS. By the warning example of the deluge in the days of Noah

to the wicked; and by four parables, the first three relating to his professing church—the servants expecting their Lord's return, the ten virgins and the talents; and the last, the sheep and goats, relating apparently to the nations of the earth at large.

The lessons which it speaks to us, after the Revolutions which we have been witnessing in the last forty years, (which probably have commenced fulfilling, Luke xxi. 25, 26.)¹ are peculiarly impressive. THEY ARE THE LESSONS FOR THIS GENERATION. May our God lead his ministers and people every where diligently to study these lessons!²

But we return to the more direct consideration of literal interpretation. In a remarkable part of this prophecy, there is an express declaration, *Then shall they see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.* Mark xiii. 26. Luke xx. 27. Mat.

¹ The Revolution of France seemed to terminate, when Bonaparte was dethroned, and peace was established; yet the events of the twenty years since have abundantly proved, that though there was an interval in the shocks of the earthquake, there has been nothing to lead us to conclude that the judgments on papal countries have ceased. Look at the troubled course of Europe since that time! It is striking, that Charles the Tenth of France, was compelled to resign his throne in the castle of Rombouillet, the lawful inheritance of a Protestant family, whom his ancestors had driven from their home, as if to mark more the hand of God. And what has been, and is still the state of the European Kingdoms; but *distress of nations with perplexity*: yet with all the outward evidence of peace, *they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all—so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.* Let the Christian discern the signs of the times!

² The interpretation of this remarkable prophecy, most satisfactory on the whole to the author, is the one given in Abdiel's Essays p. 121—201; but see Sirr's Answer to Mr. Gipps, p. 89—113, on the two last Parables. Mr. Begg's Letter on the subject, answers many of the arguments by which the common system of interpretation has been defended.

xxiv. 30. To suppose that this is a spiritual coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, appears to me, contrary to Mat. xxiii. 39; Luke xxi. 28; and the regular course of the whole prophecy continued in Mat. xxv. The term coming in the clouds is in other passages viewed by most interpreters as a personal coming, (Dan. vii. 13; Acts i. 9—11; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Rev. i. 7.) and to give it here a spiritual instead of a literal interpretation, would be to my mind, the author speaks for himself, a wresting of the Scriptures wholly unjustifiable. The Angels addressing the Apostles, seem to have specially guarded us against this (in Acts i. 2.) by the strength of the expression, *shall so come in like manner* (οὕτως ἐλευσεται ὁ κύριος). This also meets that class of objections which considers the coming of Christ to be only a spiritual coming to establish his spiritual kingdom.¹

The varied ways in which the coming of Christ is explained, tend to shew that a spiritual coming does not accord with the simple declarations of Scripture. Some in order to meet the numerous expressions of the suddenness of our Lord's coming, deny that the Millennium is to come, and yet the order of the Apocalypse and the conformity of this hope with innumerable promises both of the Old and New Testament, make this view so unsatisfactory,

¹ The author has no wish to withhold the formidable list of those, who are stated by Mr. Towers to view the coming in the clouds in our Lord's discourse as figurative, (though he believes the opinions of many in it might be much qualified by extracts from their writings); Daubuz, Lancaster, Lightfoot, Vitringa, Le Clerc, Brenius, Whitby, Hammond, Benson, Macknight, Campbell, and Nisbett, Bishops Newton, Newcombe and Pearce. A still more formidable list might also be made on the other side, including the principal fathers of the first three centuries. But to the law and to the testimony, let each man's judgment and conscience decide from the word of God.

that it is by no means generally entertained. Others think *coming* may mean *death*; but this will not apply to the varied descriptions of his coming, and would make that which is the grand theme of prophecy an hourly and momentary event; coming as the deluge, coming as the destruction of Sodom, coming as lightning, coming with the sound of the trumpet, coming with his holy angels, applies not to death. Others think that it can only be a *spiritual coming*, before the Millennium in judgments and mercies; founding this on Daniel's giving the expression, *the Son of Man coming in the clouds*, in the symbolical part of his prediction, the Ancient of Days sitting symbolically in judgment, and the Son of Man's coming in the clouds not being mentioned in the literal explanation; but it is forgotten that God is essentially INVISIBLE; his sitting in judgment is necessarily invisible; the Son of Man is VISIBLE and the kingdom given to him is literally mentioned in the symbolical part of the prophecy, just as it is in the literal explanation. His coming personally to establish his kingdom rests not on that passage alone, but on other passages that cannot be so escaped. (2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; 1 Pet. v. 4.) These varied ways in which a personal coming is avoided, and these different plans for escaping from the force of plain expressions, tend to shew us that the mind naturally turns to any thing rather than yield to the unwelcome fact of such an unparalleled interference with and disturbance, not only of all its preconceived notions, but of the whole present system and course of this world. Let us yield to the plain meaning of the words, and believe that *coming* means *coming*, the *Son of Man's coming*, means *the Son of Man's coming*; his

coming in the clouds, (Acts i. 11.) means *his coming in the clouds*, and our ignorance of the time, and the suddenness of it, makes it impossible that there should certainly be an intervening period of one thousand years yet to come; and we shall find consistency in our plans, and rest to our souls. Thus we shall be enabled to yield up our minds with comfort and satisfaction to the obvious meaning of innumerable expressions throughout the word of God; without any jarring between our opinion and the apparent statements of the Divine Record.

Though the practical use of a doctrine, is not the ground on which we can prove it, as we are hardly competent judges on that point, yet as it is often objected to præmillennial views; what is the real importance of them? does not death answer the same end in practice, as the coming of Christ is expected to answer? it may be observed in reply: death in itself is *the wages of sin* and an object of terror, rather than of hope, Christ's coming is from a covenant of love, terrible indeed to the wicked, but a *blessed hope* to the righteous; death does not ordinarily come without some previous notice and time of preparation, our Saviour comes quite by surprise. We think we can ward off death by skill and care and medicine for a long time, there is no warding off the irresistible coming of the Lord. Death does not take away our possessions from our family and friends, and therefore does not effectually separate us from the world; but our Saviour's coming is the entire destruction of all worldly plans, hopes, and prospects; takes away estates, mortgages, funds, titles, earthly reputation, and every thing on which the carnal heart builds, not only from us, but from

our children, and leaves us and them nothing but the heavenly inheritance, and the promised glories of the Redeemer; and that *when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Hence it is, *he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* The coming of Christ is then far more effectual to wean us from the world, and to lead us to bring up our children separated from it, and dead to it, and living only for *the kingdom that cannot be moved.*

A mixture in the same passage of figurative and literal expression, is not uncommon. We see this, Isa. xlv. 3—5. Where we have first the figure, and then the explanation, and then again an enlargement of the figure, and an enlarged explanation. Almost all figures difficult of comprehension are literally explained in the scriptures, and often in the same passage where the figure occurs. (See John vii. 38, 39; many instances of such explanation occur in the book of Revelation). If figurative language be interpreted not fancifully, but agreeably to the Scriptures, there will be few cases where humble and prayerful Christians will differ. Hooker's rule is here of great value, "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art which changes the meaning of words as Alchymes does or would do the substance of metals, makes of any thing what it lists, and brings in the end all truth to nothing."

The extracts from varied authors in the note in a former page (especially those from Bishop Hall)

will shew to what great lengths able and good men have gone in that spiritualizing system, which has been far from a harmless perversion of the words of the Holy Spirit.

Every passage of God's word should be interpreted literally where the predictions can be literally fulfilled, unless there be a necessity from the subject, or the context, to the contrary, or an absurdity by doing so, or a scriptural authority to justify another interpretation. Dr. John Smith justly remarks, "Although the prophets use words so frequently in a figurative or metaphorical sense, yet we ought not without necessity to depart from the primitive and original sense of the language." We must not forsake the proper meaning, without an evident reason and necessity. David Levi justly reproaches Christians "Can anything be more absurd than to explain the prophecies which foretell the calamity which is to befall the Jews in a literal sense, and those which speak of their future felicity in a spiritual and mystical sense!" In the literal interpretation however, there is peculiar need of exercising that waiting spirit, which is the characteristic posture of a believer's mind in the interpretation of prophecy. *I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me and said, write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.*

Vitringa gives this important rule—"We must never depart from the literal meaning of the subject mentioned, in its own appropriate name, if all or its principal attributes square with the subject of the prophecy." A farther rule of Vitringa's may assist us where a literal interpretation will not stand: "If the attributes by no means agree with the subject expressed by its own name, we must think of another parallel or corresponding subject, which is mystically called by this name, on account of the agreement between the type and antitype. There are instances in the case of *Elias*, Mal. iv. 5; *David*, Jer. xxx. 20; *Ezekiel* xxxiv. 23, 24; *Solomon*, Psalm lxii. 1; *Edom* Isaiah lxiii. 1."

Gaussenus (quoted by Vitringa) thus illustrates the subject: "The whole of the Old Testament, with the exception of a few places, has a meaning sufficiently suited for those times, and some way or other adapted to the circumstances of the Israelites; but the unalterable wisdom of God showed itself in this, that he superinduced upon it a more exalted meaning; and while the Apostles open this out by the sacred skill of the Holy Spirit, we are struck with astonishment at such great things, and praise our Heavenly Father, who has revealed to his children those things which he has hidden from the wise and prudent."

There are but few predictions of Scriptures that have received their full accomplishment. Even those relating to nations connected with the Jews have not in all their parts been fulfilled. A list might be drawn out of particulars unfulfilled, as well as of those which have been fulfilled respecting Babylon, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and other countries. When

God foretells things, he takes that large view which comprehends the whole of his dispensations, and frequently passes rapidly from a commencing to a completing accomplishment. We shall thus find the first and second coming of Christ so intermingled, that only the result can shew us the fulfilment of the whole. The name Babylon given to the Roman Church seems to intimate that there may be a farther fulfilment in it of those predictions in the Old Testament which were first pronounced against Babylon of old.

CHAPTER XV.

ON VARIED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MORE
OBSCURE PROPHECIES.

THE subject of prophecy, in one important respect, is brought at present, in an unfavourable, not to say erroneous aspect, before the public mind. The mass of clear prophecy that has been remarkably fulfilled, is very great. This having been fully developed in former works, to the general satisfaction of men's minds, many modern authors have given comparatively little attention to the *plain* prophecies that have been, or even to those that are to be *clearly* fulfilled; but chiefly discuss, and differ upon, the more difficult predictions.

Hence a bystander may be ready to think that the whole subject of prophecy is full of nothing but difficulties; the reading of such books as Keith's first work, and Bishop Newton's Dissertations, may show that this is by no means the case, and that there is irresistible evidence of God's foreknowledge, and the inspiration of his word, to a candid mind, in *prophecy*, unquestionably written long before the events

took place, and already fulfilled in corresponding history.

It is important, however, to remove the stumbling block of the differences of eminently pious and good men on obscurer prophecies, and to lessen the impediment which this presents to the pursuit of this deeply interesting and practical subject. As it is greatly to be desired that these differences should never be carried on in a spirit that may pain a Christian brother, or excite unholy feelings in his mind, so is it desirable also that these differences should not be magnified; the effects of which will be to raise an insuperable obstacle to the study of prophecy, or to weaken that evidence which it has furnished of Divine inspiration, or to set aside the labours of holy and learned men, in which the Protestant Church has rested for centuries.

There are some great points in which all who have deeply and seriously studied prophecy are agreed, and especially to those great objects of prophecy, the near coming in some way, of our Lord, (in which Mr. Faber is not an exception,) and to judgments connected with it, there is a remarkable uniformity of testimony among all the most diligent students of Prophecy. Even where a spiritual Millennium only is expected, a coming distinguished by preceding judgments, and a subsequent blessedness is anticipated. Where the præmillennial advent is denied, (as by our own Lightfoot, Bishop Hall, and Mr. Gipps, or the Foreign Divines, Maastricht, Turretine, and Markius,) the Millennium is supposed to be past, and the Saviour's coming near. Where the Revelation is supposed to be unfulfilled, (as by Mr. Burgh and Mr. Maitland) the Saviour's speedy

coming is expected. Even where, as by Faber and Vint, a personal coming is denied, an awful intermediate coming, in judgments on the wicked, and blessedness to the righteous is declared. The voice of prophetic writers is here harmonious to a surprising extent. May these great truths then, approaching awful judgments, and approaching incalculable mercies, attract the minds of Christians, and lead all to the holiness, and spirituality, and blessedness of a waiting, prepared, and joyfully expecting state of mind: may we throw off all slumbers, and trim our lamps for that which the concurrent voice of Prophetic interpreters states to be near. *Behold the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him.*

The varied interpretations of Prophecy, and especially of the book of Revelation, it must be allowed, however, are exceedingly distracting and confusing. Of the APOCALYPSE, some say all has been fulfilled, some say none has been fulfilled; some give one part of the book, and others a totally distinct series to the same part. How shall we gain a guide to our path?

Let us remember that we are in the midst yet of God's dispensations; the building of his Temple is not completed; the scaffolding is about a large part of it, the rubbish is not removed, many parts are unfinished, and those that are in a state of forwardness, want that entire completion which will show their full and appropriate use, and their perfect beauty, when the magnificent Temple is altogether complete and furnished.

Now the Revelation is a plan of this building in its varied parts, and in its completion; and human writers are not like the great Architect, who has all

in his mind, but like lookers on, having indeed a hope of partaking hereafter of the worship, and obtaining a residence within the courts, but yet having little architectural skill to discover its state, and progress, and ultimate glory.

Let us then imagine these different lookers on coming to this building from time to time in its progress. They have cast their eye over the plan; but perhaps cursorily, perhaps misled by false explanations, or confused by varied accounts of it, and thus they look on what has been doing in past years. To some it seems a heap of confusion; the ground broken up in all directions; heaps of soil in one part, of materials for building in another, a large and extensive erection indeed before them, but no beauty or harmonious proportion, and they say at once, this is not the building that our plan points out. Our temple is not yet begun.

Another looker on comes, and gazing on a part that is advanced beyond the rest, and finding the floors laid, the windows in, and the rooms almost ready, and looking only at this part, he concludes at once the building is finished, the plan is completed, what can you expect more?

Another looker on, surveying the rising edifice, comes to a part which he thinks he has satisfactorily made out, the very rooms described in one part of the plan seem before him; the very pillars, and length, and breadth of it, quite alike; but his neighbour who comes next, shews him something which throws considerable doubt upon this, and leads to a suspicion that the room he was looking at in the plan, is quite in another part of the building.

Another then comes, and says it is all too confused

for any thing definite to be made out, why do you perplex yourself about it. An unbeliever gladly avails himself of this, to persuade men to disregard alike the designs of the architect, and the progress of the edifice, since their correspondence with each other cannot be identified.

This figure may illustrate the present states of mind in which many are regarding this book; yet must we *hear and read the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.*

The humble inquirer after truth, may, therefore, be perfectly assured of the infinite wisdom and ability of the great architect, and that the plan which he has laid down is the best that can be devised for his end: he may be assured also that the same mind which devised the plan and *gave it to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass*, is constantly at work, accomplishing all the parts of his own design, and that it has really been going on for all the years that have elapsed since the plan was first given.

To ascertain farther what parts of the building have been erected, and what remains to be completed, will require much careful investigation, and a very slow, and patient, and long continued search. It will not do to come at once to plausible conclusions, and because of a likeness in a few things, conclude that there is a likeness in all. We must first endeavour to get a clear idea of the plan itself; and the way in which the architect proposed to proceed. We must then get a knowledge of the varied parts of the building as far as it has already gone. And here we may perhaps mistake temporary sheds and erections for more durable and solid parts. Our

next step will be a most careful comparison between the parts built and the plan.

And then, remember, still our knowledge must yet be very imperfect, for the building itself is incomplete. All dogmatism, all despising of others, all fancied superior discernment does not become the looker on. An architect would smile at the guesses which some apparently wise lookers on make respecting an earthly building. *Patient waiting* is then a very important part of the wiser way: not careless, unconcerned waiting; for there is a glory about this temple that concerns every human being, and to partake of its glories and dwell in its courts for ever is the happy portion of those interested in it. What mark of wisdom is it to neglect it altogether, when the Lord of all has promised his blessing to those who duly attend to it? We shall find in so doing many quickening motives to stir us up to gain a meetness for partaking in the everlasting worship of the temple above.

It is therefore an important duty here to be an inquirer after the truth, holding fast what is good, and patiently expecting the completion; gaining help from some in the way of guarding against past mistakes, hints of parts already erected, and of parts yet to be completed; and from others, (like Mede and those who have availed themselves of his labours) in a general explanation of the whole system.

And after all let us remember the infinite wisdom, the almighty power, the unsearchable riches, and inviolable fidelity of him who is carrying on his work till it be completed, and how little our wisdom is, and how certainly at length *he shall bring forth the headstone thereof, with shoutings, crying grace grace unto it.*

The difficulties are indeed very needful, and very valuable in this view, to stain the pride of man's wisdom, and to lay him in the dust. Man is compelled by irresistible evidence to believe that the plan is altogether divine and infinitely wise, and yet he is unable so minutely to explain it, as to give an unexceptionable view of the whole. This accords with all other parts of God's glorious works, and must at least shew him how ignorant and feeble his mind is, contrasted with the mind that formed the plan!

And the varying interpretations are all necessary and valuable to bring out this truth distinctly and prominently. This will also doubtless lead on ultimately to the full discovery of the whole design. Those very interpretations which are the farthest from the truth, may serve, not only to keep up present attention to the prophecies, but also in the result to make the truth more bright and manifest, and to bring out parts of it which would otherwise be unnoticed. This effect has indeed already been in a measure accomplished, and thus no one who has in a serious spirit turned his attention to the subject, shall have laboured wholly in vain. All such researches, even where they have not led to a just view of the meaning, shall yet help to shew the wisdom of the Architect, and the completeness of his plan; and his servants will rejoice in his exaltation, though they be brought low, (John iii. 30).

Another valuable end of difficulties in interpretation may be this; the obscurities of prophecy keep it veiled both from the wicked and from the righteous. It is to be hid from the wicked, (Dan. xii. 10.) *for many reasons.* Though Jeremiah's divine in-

spiration was acknowledged, and his love to his country unquestionable; yet how he was misrepresented because of his plain predictions of the success of the Chaldeans! Had the statements of St. John, respecting the overthrow of the Roman Empire, been plainer, the hatred of the Roman Emperors, against Christians, might have been needlessly heightened, and Christians needlessly harassed. As it was, they attributed the decay of the empire to Christianity, and St. Augustine had to write his vast work, "The City of God," to set aside the false imputation. And as to the true servants of Christ, had the period of 1260 years of an afflicted state of the Church been literally mentioned, or generally known till the time was nearly expired, it would have been impossible to fulfil the plain direction of a waiting and watchful spirit for our Lord's coming, when there was a certainty of such a lengthened previous tribulation.

Do not then be staggered and shaken at difficulties, nor let apparently weighty new views, over-setting old schemes of interpretation, easily carry you away. Do not throw the study up, and say it is perfectly vain to attempt to come to just conclusions, nor be easily turned aside from long established sentiments.

God has wonderfully provided for a deep and continued interest being preserved in every part of prophecy, by giving to it that largeness of aspect which comprehends the whole of his Dispensations, and will not be fully developed till they be ended. This, which occasions one part of its obscurity and the discussions upon it, does also serve to keep alive men's attention to it, to the very end, and manifests therein the wisdom of the Father of Lights.

And the very discussions and differences are bringing into day-light hitherto hidden parts of the glories of God's truth. These things, with the progress of events, are all tending in the result to let in the full flood of broad day on that which has hitherto been little regarded, or viewed perhaps as obscure and unimportant.

It may assist us rightly to view these differences, if we can imagine the state of mind of God's servants in former days respecting unfulfilled prophecies. The Israelites in bondage, in Egypt, lost sight of the promises made to Abraham, so that even when Moses was raised up, as their deliverer to accomplish them, *they hearkened not for anguish of spirit*. We may easily suppose how little they credited the predictions given to Abraham, about his seed and the land of Canaan. The Jews in Babylon seem also generally to have disregarded the predictions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, till Daniel was led to consider them and to pray: and then the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, probably by means of Daniel, to make proclamation in their favour, and raised the spirit of the Chief Fathers to go back. Through how many difficulties then had that partial return to struggle before they were re-established, and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had to strengthen the hands of Zerubbabel and Joshua against those who said, *the time is not come*, (Haggai i. 2,) and to refer them to the words of *the former prophets*, (Zech. vii. 7.) There were differences of opinion, and yet the prediction was realised. The prophets themselves had great searchings, *what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify*, and we may suppose, though they had general views that

were correct, yet, where uninspired, could little distinguish the manner of fulfilment of many of the predictions.

To come down still later. In the time of our Lord, the chief Priests and Scribes knew where he would be born, (Matt. ii. 5, 6); yet how little interest did they take about his birth, though their attention was so remarkably called to it. The Saviour lived among them for thirty years, little regarded by them. And, when he had wrought his wonderful works, and had suffered his appointed death; though the darkness and the earthquake for a moment astounded, they still view him as a *Deceiver*. We may suppose the chief Priests, and Scribes, and Pharisees, and Gamaliel, and the Lawyers consulting together, and saying, 'It is impossible the prophecies can be fulfilled, where is the glory predicted, and where is deliverance from our enemies.' Or we may suppose, after his death, even his Apostles conferring together; all the predictions of his remarkable birth, and life, and death, had been exactly fulfilled; they had been witnesses of these things, and their minds deeply engaged in them; and yet they then saw not their fulfilment; but their mind is expressed, *we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*; whatever different opinions and views there were among them of what had passed, doubts were not dispelled, till the Lord himself appeared among them, and said unto them, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding to understand the Scriptures, and said*

unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.

There may then be very great darkness on clearly fulfilled prophecy when our minds are under prejudices, and there may be differences among God's children as to really fulfilled prophecy, and this may even continue till the Saviour himself come in his glory and dispel every doubt. Calvin distinguishes between the design of Prophecy, and the minute interpretation, (see his notes on Zech. i. 7—11,) and shews that if we are only desiring edification, it will be easy to collect the sum of the whole prophecy. It is easy to collect, for instance, the scope of the book of Revelations ;—that it is given to discover to us the coming again, in power and great glory, of the Saviour, and till that coming, to shew to us a suffering and afflicted Church ; and after that coming a triumphant and blessed Church. How inexpressibly important have these general truths been in all the ages of Christianity to the true servants of Christ !

The recent publication of views tending to overthrow all former interpretations, may be overruled for good, if it excite the interest of many who would otherwise wholly disregard the subject ; and may lead to sifting to the utmost, all received views, and to the ultimate establishment of truth in the minds of those, who, loving the truth, take diligent pains to search it out.

It is the more to be hoped that this may be the effect, as the ability of those who have given forth these views is sufficient to enable them to detect every latent error ; and their piety such as it is to be hoped *will preserve them from willingly fighting against*

the truth. All sincere inquiries into prophecy are infinitely better than indifference.

Some instructive practical lessons may be drawn from these things :—

1. THE DANGER OF DISBELIEVING PROPHECY. This unbelief damped the hopes of the Israelites in Egypt, and filled them with anguish of spirit ; it made the Jews heartless to return from Babylon and slack in building the temple. The Jewish rulers were from disregard of prophecies led to fill up their sins ; and the Apostles were filled with despondency at their Masters leaving them, (John xvi. 6, 7), though it was needful for their best advantage, that he should go away. Let us then, warned by so many varied examples, attend to this *sure light*, and get on to this safe watch-tower, and wait for our Lord.

THE GRAND DANGER TO BE FEARED in these varied interpretations, is A STATE OF SLUMBER, as to the speedy, personal, and visible coming of Christ. O let us never forget, that not merely the foolish virgins slumbered, but THE WISE VIRGINS also. The tendency of all these differences of Christians is to deaden our faith in, and dull our hope of our Lord's coming, and to cause our love to wax cold. Any thing that has these direct effects upon our mind, cannot be the truth.

It is a just remark of Mr. Cuninghame's ' that no mistakes of honest inquiries into prophetic truth are so fatal as the error of neglecting and despising the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus. Rev. xix. 10.'

2. Again, varied interpretation may lead us NOT TOO PERTINACIOUSLY TO ADHERE TO VIEWS which we have given to the public, should subsequent in-

vestigation throw doubt upon them. Whatever may be the correctness or incorrectness of Mr. Faber's last views, the candour and ingenuousness of mind with which he has been willing to adopt fresh sentiments on a variety of points where he thought evidence compelled him to do so, is very remarkable and exemplary. In the same way Mr. Cuninghame has acknowledged a mistake as to the time of the expected restoration of Judah. Such acknowledgments are highly honourable to those who make them, and so far from leading any to triumph in their mistakes, should rather give us greater confidence that the writers are pursuing substantial truth, and not a mere private system; and lead us to copy a frankness truly Christian.

3. It is also important to be free from DOGMATISM, even when on the strongest grounds we think that we are right. It is a large subject, full of serious difficulties, and spread over vast fields of God's word and God's providence; he then must be greatly blessed indeed in considering it, who is wholly free from mistake. When such men as Mede, Newton, Cressener, &c. have in some things erred, (and who will say they have not,) we ought surely not to be over-confident in our own interpretation.

4. Again, varied interpretations should excite us to increased and closer INVESTIGATION; the prophecy shall be so completed in the end of God's dispensation, that we may compare it with its accomplishment, and fulfil the direction, and attain the promise, *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read: no one of these shall fail; none shall want her mate.* So far from giving up the study because of its difficulties, we should only search the Scriptures more diligently.

It is not so surrounded with difficulties but that patient investigation will clear away many, and open much invaluable light.

5. The end of all shall be the FULL TRIUMPH OF GOD'S OWN WORD, and of all who rest in it and obey it. *The word of the Lord is tried*—it is pure truth—it shall stand for ever; things will clear up, difficulties vanish, and God's mind and will, be fully developed and manifested.

A glory gild's the sacred page
Majestic as the sun;
It gives a light to every age;—
It gives, but borrows none.

The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
His truths upon the nations rise;—
They rise, but never set.

6. SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL, however contrary to our own, and deep REVERENCE FOR HIS WORD, should be farther results of all these discussions to those under the real teaching of the Spirit. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord.* If his truth be established, his name honoured, his word magnified, and his will accomplished, the Christian's highest aims are gained.

7. In conclusion, I would remark that the whole subject may suggest to Prophetical Students, an important CAUTION, not needlessly to multiply new interpretations,—not without full consideration and deliberation to bring before the public what may be a stumbling block to the weak; and this equally applies to Authors and Editors of periodical works. May we all remember the almost closing words of

the last book of prophecy: *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

CHAPTER XVI.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

ONE design of the Author in the preceding remarks, has been to excite A DUE ATTENTION TO PROPHECY. An exclusive and speculative regard to it leads to a serious shutting out of primary and important duties, and to controversies and divisions; but the subject of prophecy makes so large a proportion of Scripture, that no one can *slight* it without disobeying the plain direction of searching the Scriptures. There have indeed been so many opposing interpretations, and so much self confident and controversial statement of prophetic views, that Christians are really in danger of contemning that which God requires them to take heed to, (2 Peter i. 19.) neglecting that on the reading, hearing, and keeping of which he has pronounced a blessing, (Rev. i. 3.)

Only let us attend to it in the spirit of prayer, humility, forbearance, practical application, patient research, and waiting; suspending our judgment in doubtful matters, and open to conviction, and we shall find the study of prophecy very quickening to

our souls, cheering to our spirit, and animating us to the diligent discharge of all our duties. We shall *keep* as well as *read* the thing written. Rev. i. 3.

The PRACTICAL APPLICATION of prophecy is a point of very vital importance. When our Lord and the Apostles interpret the prophecies, they join with them the immediate use and practical application to the hearer. Has not this been too much neglected? In our eagerness to establish what we have considered the true view, have we not sometimes lost sight of the important personal benefit of the prophecy? Prophecy, in all its parts, is full of the most holy and varied practical instruction.

The leading benefits designed by the sacred writers in bringing forward prophetic truth seems, however, to be this: by exciting our hopes and our fears to lead us to fly to Christ, without delay, for an interest in his great salvation. The broad letters on the sign post of Prophecy every where are, "Fly to Jesus;" the hand stretched out every where directs to Jesus. Observe how St. Peter, after explaining the prophetic meaning of various passages in the Psalms, Acts ii. 14—36, by the stimulating hope of *the remission of sins*, and *the gift of the Holy Ghost*, (ii. 38); and by the fear of perishing with an *untoward generation*, (ii. 40); calls them at once to *repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ*. Observe how St. Paul, in pleading with the Jews at Antioch, in Pisidia, after explaining the voices of the Prophets, (Acts xiii. 23—37,) comes to a practical exhortation by holding out all the blessings of *forgiveness* and *justification* to the *believers in Jesus*, (verses 38, 39,) and all the terror of perishing to the *unbeliever*, (verses 40, 41.)

The great practical Lessons of the Book of Revelation are intermingled in every part. The exhortations to fidelity, patience, obedience, watchfulness and circumspection—receiving Christ and waiting for him, are every where interspersed with prophecy.

O what a vanity it is to have our minds filled with the images of prophecy, and to be able to tell every varied interpretation of human writers; and yet to have our hearts alienated from God, and estranged from the Saviour, and to be without his Spirit! How awful would it be for a man to be able to discuss prophecy with vast skill, and shew its fulfilment with great talents, (1 Cor. xiii. 2,) and yet, as to real conversion, be far off from God, and perish at the last with infidels and unbelievers! May God preserve the writer and reader from all fatal delusions! It is not without its most valuable instruction, that our Lord represents numbers thus deceived, at the time when he comes again: *MANY shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not PROPHESIED in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* He precedes this instruction also by shewing the character of those who shall share his kingdom. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

One of the peculiarities of the last days being a *form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*, how needful it is to BE WATCHFUL ON THIS POINT! The present state of the Church may be compared to those nuts which have a husk, and a shell, and are growing on the trees. The visible Church is but a

small part of the world ; and when you look at that Church, the larger part of it is only a husk, and when you have taken off the husk, and come to the professors of religion,—there is still an outside shell, covering the interior part ; all those exterior parts, the tree, the husk, and the shell, are indeed needful for the growth and protection of the interior kernel, which otherwise would be devoured by the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and also for its becoming mature and fit for the Master's use ; but by-and-bye the exterior things will be laid aside, and only the interior be regarded and preserved. Do not be deceived by the profession you make, by your contiguity to and connection with the reality ; by your usefulness and necessity to its preservation ; the separating and dividing time is coming. *Who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap.*

How important is HEAVENLY WISDOM in this study ! The Scriptures particularly mention this. Hosea, in the close of his Prophecies, says, *Who is wise, and he shall understand these things, prudent, and he shall know them.* Daniel, in the close of his Prophecies, asserts, *None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand,* Dan. xii. 10. David closes one of his Psalms with a similar declaration, *Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord,* Psalm cvii. 43. May we pray much then for heavenly wisdom, to guard us from error and lead us into the truth. The history of the Church has shewn, that we are peculiarly exposed to the temptation of precipitate interpretation of the varied symbols and figures of

God's word, which, as Bacon observes, have a two-fold use, "folding up and keeping of things under a veil, and enlightening and laying open of obscurities." God thus *conceals* his purposes from the wicked, and *illustrates* them to the wise, (Hosea xiv. 9.)

How valuable also is PATIENT STUDY! There must be a labour of mind, to get a clear understanding of prophecy. *In his law doth he meditate day and night.* The Prophets speak, in a forcible figure, of eating God's word; *thy words were found and I did eat them,* Jer. xv. 16. The direction, with the roll of the book, to Ezekiel was, *open thy mouth and eat that I give thee. Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll, that I give thee. Then I did eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.* So St. John is told to *take the Book and eat it up.* The prayer of our Liturgy, 'Grant that we may read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,' adopts the same idea. It implies the continued and thoughtful meditation on the word of prophecy, till it fill and embue our whole minds, assimilating them to itself, as food digested is assimilated to the flesh. Prophecies which seem very obscure at first, will often clear up in patient meditation, just as when you come out of the full light of day into a dark room, you can at first distinguish nothing, but if you wait a little, till your sight is enured to the gloom, you will begin to discern things that were quite invisible before.

The view of the subject taken in this work, will, we trust, serve to CAUTION us against speculative anticipations of future events, as if we could unfold the purposes of Jehovah. Let us guard against what St.

Peter mentions, (2 Peter i. 20.) any *private interpretation* of prophecy, apart from the analogy of Scripture, which is one harmonious whole, and in its varied parts the work of Divine Mind, the Holy Spirit of our God. Prophecy will, therefore, ever be the best commentary on Prophecy till the event make it plain. As Bishop Horsley explains it, no prophecy of scripture is of self interpretation; the sense is to be sought in the events of the world and in the harmony of the prophetic writings at large, rather than in the bare terms of any single prediction. Scripture prophecy takes large and comprehensive surveys of events. Let us watch against any views not according to the mind of the Spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 10—15.

It may serve also as a guard against censuring a view of prophecy which may not accord with our respective partialities. One, strongly and justly impressed with the magnitude of the conversion of the Jews in its consequences on the world at large, may be disposed to find fault with an application of the promises of the Old Testament to the Christian Church; but the preceding observations will show that such an application is made by the inspired writers, and justly adopted in the judgment of the soundest divines. Another, under equally strong and just feelings of the immense and innumerable multitudes of the Gentiles, all having immortal souls and perishing yearly, the promises made of their conversion, and the blessings already given to missionary efforts, may be apt to disregard the peculiar situation and privileges of the Jews, and, not only to lose sight of those prophecies which *concern* their conversion and restoration, but to

undervalue that which is of immense moment in the future glory and blessedness of the world at large. But why should the servants of Christ, aiming at the same happy result, and agreeing in every essential point, be disunited on this, or in any way use expressions that may damp any effort made for the salvation of either Jew or Gentile?

One says, 'Christ will certainly come before the millennium;' another says, 'He will not come till after it be passed;' a third, 'He will come without any millennium.' The Author has expressed his own views that our Lord will visibly appear before the millennium; but those who see not this, agree that he will come, and come unexpectedly, and that we should be ready for his coming, and view it as a quickening motive to labours of love; we are all united in the practical issues which we desire, and let us bear and forbear with each other in love, till we *see eye to eye*. *To abound in love toward one another* should be the effect of looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. 1 Thess. iii. 12. *Grudge not one against another, lest ye be condemned; behold the Judge standeth at the door.* James ii. 9.

Some of those who have taken up the subject of prophecy warmly and speculatively, have expressed themselves so confidently, with such sharpness and bitterness against others, with such assumption of superior wisdom and such despising of those who have differed from them, as not only to pain their fellow Christians, but to lead to much *doubtful disputation*, and excite great prejudices against the study of their favourite subject. Others have been ready to exclude from Christian communion, all who differed from their particular sentiments, and to admit

at once to Christian fellowship, as partakers of Divine grace, all who concurred with them. These great errors are carefully to be guarded against by the true Christian. They are very injurious, and corrupt *the mind from the simplicity that is in Christ*. 2 Cor. xi. 3. How important is it ever to remember—*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal: and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing.* 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. Let us study the prophecies as Daniel did, with prostration, humiliation, and persevering prayer.

We may from this subject learn also the true USE OF PROPHECY. It is not primarily intended as a rule of duty.¹ Precepts are the rule of duty. Much less should prophecy ever be so interpreted as to interfere with plain duty. For instance, if any one should suppose from the predicted hardness of the Jews, that it was our duty not to endeavour to promote their conversion; or if any one should suppose, because the conversion of the Jews will be a blessing to the Gentiles, that therefore we should do nothing for the heathen till the Jews were converted, they would be equally wrong; for the precept, which is the rule of duty, is express, *go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel TO EVERY CREATURE*. But the use of prophecy is of another kind;—previously to the event, to raise general expectations, and thus quicken us to duty, excite our hopes, and stimulate our labours, and

¹ Not but that duty may be gathered from prophecy, as the Apostle gathered a command and a duty *to turn to the Gentiles*, from the prediction, *I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles*. Acts xv. 47.

prove our faith, and strengthen us to endure present trials: and, subsequently to the event, to turn to us for a testimony, becoming an evidence of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, which may confirm our own faith as to all that is yet to be accomplished, and sufficiently answer all gainsayers, and objectors to their just claim to the title of the word of God.

Therefore let us not be restrained or cooled in the support of such a blessed cause, as promoting the conversion of immortal souls, by any private and questionable views of unfulfilled prophecy; it rests on plain and positive precept: and on those broad, solid, and effective grounds which cannot be shaken, and on which Christians are generally agreed. The ultimate success of the whole work is certain, and the present duties are plain and obvious. He who neglects the care of either Jew or Gentile, neglects a plain duty and a blessed privilege.

Let us seek to carry on every holy work in OUR SAVIOUR'S SPIRIT, and labour to save immortal souls in that union of heart for which he poured the affecting prayer—*that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* This practical point is of immense moment. O that we may all carefully and habitually maintain the spirit of love in all our discussions. The kingdom of the great enemy of God and man has been vigorously assailed, and he is doubtless watching to divide Christians, that he may weaken and impair their efforts. Let us not be ignorant of his devices. There is one all-important rule that we should constantly bear in mind—*Whereto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

This will lead us rather to dwell on those things in which Christians unite, than to press our particular sentiments, if those sentiments are allowedly of inferior moment. We should hail, and help, and rejoice in each other's hopes and labours and success in the salvation of Jew and Greek, even as the Apostle presses the prophetical exhortation—*Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.* Rom. xv. 10.

Not that the subject of prophecy should not be fully discussed, or that those who have studied the subject with care and attention should not state their sentiments freely, and firmly, and at length; only with humility and brotherly love, of which we have seen in our days many delightful examples. Far be it from any to repress a full and free investigation of prophecy in a right spirit. In guarding against one evil, we should not fall into another. Such writers as Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Hurd, Lowth, Woodhouse, and others, with Davison, Keith, Faber, Cuninghame, and many other living authors, have done much, notwithstanding some lesser mistakes which here seem inevitable, to elucidate this deep subject. It is greatly to be regretted that in some of those writers, whose powers of mind and genius and research are admirable, we find not that devotion, meekness, and spirituality and those gracious affections, which are peculiarly needful for the discovery of the divine mind. Even those who have allowedly fallen into great mistakes, have yet cleared up some things: and there is no writer of eminence who has not shed some important light on its difficulties. Let the whole range of prophecy, then, be canvassed; let mind, and research, and piety, be cast into it; and thus many shall run to and fro, and

knowledge shall be increased. We may justly expect, as we draw nearer the grand events which are before the church, that there will be more light beaming on its future hopes and prospects.

Let the Holy Scriptures therefore be searched diligently respecting this, as well as every other part of their invaluable contents; especially is it to be desired that the original Scriptures should be more generally studied and understood. Sacred criticism, modestly advanced, with competent knowledge, is far from being injurious to the cause of truth; and we owe much to those learned men who have thus removed difficulties by which the sacred writings had been long needlessly obscured.

Nor must we forbear here earnestly to press the great importance of fervent and persevering prayer for the spirit of divine wisdom, the anointing which teacheth us all things. We press this, not because we can expect any direct inspiration to discover to us the future purposes of the Almighty, but because fervent prayer will keep far from us all dogmatism, pride, and fancied superior wisdom and knowledge; fervent prayer will produce that humble waiting state of mind which God delights to bless; fervent prayer will obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit to remove our prejudices, and will make us willing to see, embrace, and profess the truth, however contrary to our former sentiments; fervent prayer will keep alive in us a cordial interest for the whole cause of Christ, with a jealous fear of being biassed by a favourite part; and with such tempers and dispositions we shall doubtless be preserved from any material error.

The interpretation of prophecy is a subject, there-

fore, that should not be lightly entered upon, lest, instead of shewing what is really the mind of the Lord, we put our own mind in its place, and either add to, or take from his word. Especially when our sentiments contradict the general opinion of the main body of Christians through successive ages, it becomes still more incumbent on us not to advance and press our particular opinions but with great caution and diffidence.

Another suggestion may be allowed the writer; while asserting the duty of confessing important truth; in our efforts to advance the kingdom of Christ, and in our devotions, and especially in published forms of prayer, those who hold such views should be careful NOT TO URGE ANY PRIVATE OR DISPUTED VIEWS OF PROPHECY, lest any who join with us should be stumbled, their zealous efforts or devotional feelings be checked, and that union of desire and labour to which the special blessing is promised should be hindered; and on the other hand those who differ from these views, should not be too sensitively alive to slight differences, Rom. xiv. 1.

To view the prophecies in their large aspect, as comprehending the general dealings of God with mankind through successive ages, enlarges and raises the mind; but exclusively or mainly to confine our views of it to one particular point has a tendency to narrow the mind, and lead it off from the great intent of prophecy.

Remembering, then, that the advancement of God's kingdom is peculiarly his own work, and that he will unfold his own plan in his own time and way, we should watch for the openings of his pro-

vidence, not attempting to force our own schemes, but rather leave it to that providence to interpret his own commands. Yet we should enter heartily when a *great and effectual door is opened*, and never was there a greater door opened, and never did the voice of Providence more manifestly call Christians to labour for the benefit of the whole human race, both Jew and Gentile, than in this day. O may we be wise to *discern the signs of the times*, and to obey the plain command of our Saviour. May we be quickened in promoting his cause, by the cheering light of prophecy, which, when accomplished, confirms our faith in the Divine Records; and while unaccomplished, supports and animates the Church in its labours and sufferings with the bright hope of a future triumph and a final recompense.

This leads me to add some practical remarks on one main improvement of prophecy, PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST. That coming leads on to the great issue of all the events of this lower world, and the Scriptures dwell very much on our being prepared for it; may the Divine Spirit assist this effort to lead the reader more believingly, practically, and constantly, to look forward to his coming.

If he will *appear the second time without sin unto salvation to them that look for him*;—if in that day, the crown of righteousness will be given by the righteous judge, *to them that love his appearing*, (2 Tim. iv. 8.) how important is it for us earnestly to look for and affectionately to desire that event!

If the warning is again and again repeated, *Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh*, Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13. If we are solemnly charged, *Be ye also ready, for in such an hour*

as ye think not, the Son of man cometh, Matt. xxiv. 44, and our Lord in that part of prophecy which seems immediately to relate to the period in which we are now living, says, *Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame*, Rev. xvi. 15, how circumspectly should the Christian now walk, treading as on the borders of eternity, and in the anticipation of all those events which mark the last days.

There are some important Scriptural directions that we should ever bear in mind with reference to this great event.

(1.) WATCHFULNESS is the primary duty to which the Scriptures continually direct us. Some passages have already been noticed which point out this duty.

Our Lord makes it a direction applicable to *all* his people, when he says, *What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch*, Mark xii. 37. Watchfulness has a special reference to the dangers with which we are surrounded; and those dangers which are now on every side of this subject, peculiarly call us to this circumspect spirit. The infidelity of the present times is peculiarly marked, open, and contagious. Watch then against temptations to unbelief,—every jot and tittle of God's word in its plain meaning is altogether true, though the Neologian, learned in languages and human science, even under the mask of Christianity, attempt to explain it away, and though the profligate openly revile and scoff at it.

The novelties of lively imaginations are also to be guarded against. Be not carried away by the zeal and devotedness and talents of any man, from those old truths on which the Church has fed from the *beginning*—ask for the old paths, where is the good way

and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Satan is now specially busy, Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. This watchfulness expects sudden attacks, is not ignorant of Satan's devices, and anticipates the activity of the enemy, being always ready for him.

(2.) OCCUPATION in our master's service is a Scriptural direction on this point—*Occupy till I come.* We have many talents committed to our charge, and we are diligently to be laying them out for our master,—whether they be property, time, ability, influence, health, strength, or any other, all is to be heartily and diligently laid out for God, Matt. xxiv. 14—30. The Christian has not a moment to lose, *Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* 2 Peter i. 5—11. Seeking to save the souls of others is another most important part of our work as Christians. After St. Jude had given that lively description in Enoch's prophecy of our Lord's coming, and charged believers to *build up themselves in their most holy faith*, he tells them with regard to others, *Of some have compassion making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,* Jude 22, 23. And doing good to all men and especially to the household of faith, is so remarkably urged upon us by the account of the last judgment, that I need only refer

the Christian to that animating spring of occupation in our master's service recorded Matt. xxv. 31—46.

(3.) SOBRIETY OF MIND is another duty connected with the coming of Christ. The Apostle says, *Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ; for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day ; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others ; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night ; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation,* 1 Thess. v. 2—8. Our Lord gives similar directions, Luke xxi. 34—36. Sobriety both of mind and body is indeed to be greatly prized ; the *spirit of a sound mind* is joined with the *spirit of power and of love*, and where these go together men are eminently blessed of God. A realizing and scriptural, a holy and practical view of our Lord's speedy coming is well calculated to make us, not wild and enthusiastic either in novelties of doctrine or peculiarity of practice, but eminently sober. *Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand*, Phil. iv. 5. The Christian should not go into one real extravagance, but fully attend to *whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report*. His principles of faith, and his corresponding practice, his confession of Christ, and his adherence to his truth will expose him quite enough to the reproach of the world, with-

out courting them by needless display or peculiarity. You will, in walking in the old paths, from the various difficulties of your course, still have to attend to that direction, *gird up the loins of your mind and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

(4.) READINESS is another Scriptural direction often repeated. *Be ye therefore also ready, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not,* Luke xii. 40. This readiness has been well considered as a readiness of state and of habit. A readiness of state consisting in the pardon of all sin through the blood of Jesus; the gift of a perfect righteousness in Christ, (2 Cor. v. 21. Isaiah lxi. 10.) and an inward meetness by the power of the Spirit on the heart, (Col. i. 12.) All of which are the free gift of God, to those who come to him in the name of his Son, (Isaiah lv. 7; Rom. iii. 21, 22; and Luke xi. 13.) And a readiness of habit or actual readiness, such as Simeon and Anna, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. Our Saviour teaches us this duty very plainly. *Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.* Luke xii. 35, 36. To attain this actual readiness we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, (Titus ii. 11—13.) and mortify our sins, (Col. iii. 4, 5.) we should abide in Christ, (1 John ii. 28.) and purify ourselves as he is pure, (1 John iii. 2, 3.) Our conversation should be in heaven, (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) and our affections set on things above, (Col. iii. 2—4.) and we should be patient in tribulation. (Heb. x. 36, 37.) *Be ye also ready,* is a comprehensive direction

which leads us to the whole course of Christian duty.

(5.) INTERCESSION for others is a duty immediately connected with the study of prophecy. Daniel's example is here peculiarly instructive—*I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; and then follows that beautiful intercession given us in his ninth chapter. Oh! if prophetic studies did but lead us as they led Daniel, to much intercession for our country and our fellow-creatures, we might indeed hope for the most happy issue in an enlarged knowledge of God's will, and an enlarged blessedness to his Church.*

(6.) PATIENT WAITING FOR CHRIST—is another important scriptural direction. The Apostle prays for his Thessalonian converts—*the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.* This supposes it to be to us a most desirable event, as indeed to every Christian it is. It is surely a transporting hope, without fear, sickness, sorrow, pain, or death, to be at once changed, to put on incorruption and immortality, and after the dead in Christ are raised, to be transfigured and *caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so ever to be with him.* What tongue can tell, what imagination conceive, the rapturous joy of the emancipated Christian, in an instant freed from the body of sin, clothed with a spiritual body, and for ever like his Lord, and for ever seeing him as he is. *Let us realize this hope, and we shall see the need*

of divine grace for the patient waiting for Christ. This is equally opposed to indifference, unconcern, and neglect on the one hand; and to despondency, fainting, and weariness on the other. The Christian should both desire and expect the coming of his Saviour. His faith, hope, and love should all be in exercise on this great truth. He desires, but he waits; —he expects, but he is patient; and in due time *he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* The early Christians had to look through the long vista of at least eighteen centuries; but the bright and glowing object at the termination of this vista, kept their eye of faith steadily fixed in patient waiting for it. Enoch viewed its approach at least 5000 years beforehand, Jude 14, 15. Let not us as we approach nearer and nearer be more indifferent in *looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ*; but in its nearer approach, while we desire it more ardently, may we also patiently wait for its full revelation and glory.

(7.) CHRISTIANS COMFORTING EACH OTHER, is another duty connected with the coming of Christ. Christians are now *companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*, Rev. i. 9. They have to *suffer for well-doing*, they have to bear the scorn of the world, and the mistakes and misrepresentations even of brethren: but let us attend to the divine direction, and let the coming of Christ be viewed not as a matter of controversy but of comfort — *Wherefore comfort one another with these words—He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him, wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another, even as also ye do.* Oh if laying aside things in which we differ, we were

oftener regarding this glorious hope and speaking of it with glowing expectation, surely our hearts would be more knit together in love, and we should rise to a higher point of devotedness to God our Saviour. What consolatory hopes on the death of our brethren, (1 Thess. iv. 13.) what exceeding joy in the presence of the Lord, (Jude 24.) what a gathering together of the general assembly of the first-born, (2 Thess. ii. 1; Heb. xii. 23.) does the coming of the Lord set before us! Surely here is the Christian's most effectual topic of consolation amid all his trials and sorrows. *Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.* (1 Peter iv. 12, 13.) Exceedingly inconsistent with the hope of this coming is all bitterness, wrath, malice, and hard censures of our brethren, (Rom. xiv. 9, 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Matt. vii. 1—5; xxiv. 48, 49,) it should rather inspire feelings of sympathy, tenderness, love and compassion towards all men.

(8.) I would add another scriptural direction applicable to all, but especially to my brethren in the ministry, TO LABOUR FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS WITH AN ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE JOY which it will give us in the day of Christ. *Shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.* O what a joy is before holy Paul in the almost boundless results of his labours! a measure of this joy is also before every Christian. Then we shall understand something of the amazing magnitude of *saving a soul from death.* How often do the Apostles advert to this!—*that I may present*

you as a chaste virgin to Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 2, that you may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, Col. i. 28. What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming, for ye are our glory and joy, 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. Feed the flock of God—and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, 1 Peter v. 2—4.

O Christians! may many a voice have to testify of us before the presence of the Lord Jesus—‘It was thy holy life, thy once unwelcome but patient and persevering exhortations, thy earnest entreaties, thy long-enduring love and forbearance, thy consistent conduct, thy deadness to the world, and thy constant testimony to the Saviour, that at length led my soul to seek him for myself, and so the Lord Jesus saved me from everlasting destruction, and so he brought me to this glory.’

O that we could but more fix our eyes on this joy as an animating motive for exertion. Our Heavenly Master, *for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame; and if we would tread in his steps, we must set before us that gladness with exceeding joy, 1 Peter iv. 13, and those pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore, (Psalm xvi. 11.)* And among the richest and fullest sharers of that joy will be those who have laboured most for the salvation of the soul. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.* The truly wise in that great day which is coming, will not be those who have most skilfully acquired and most securely possessed the riches, pleasures, and honours of this world, nor those who have most largely investigated

the wonders of science, nor those who have most deeply studied even the mysteries of theology : to have gained subjects for Christ's kingdom will then be found to be the way to real greatness and blessedness, and love will then be found to be the truest wisdom. *He, and he only, that winneth souls is wise.*

The sum of the whole is, THE PRESENT LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN is to be A CONSTANT PREPARATION FOR HIS FUTURE GLORY : Nothing is indifferent ; as every hour, every thought, and every word, is ripening the wicked for eternal misery, so are they to be ripening him for his heavenly home. These two harvests are maturing at the same time (Rev. xiv. 14—20.) In the language of Dr. Chalmers, " The great work of Christ's disciples upon earth is a constant and busy process of assimilation to their Master who is in heaven. And we live under a special economy, that has been set up for the express purpose of helping it forward. It is for this in particular that the Spirit is provided. We are changed into the image of the Lord, even by the Spirit of the Lord. Nursed out of this fulness, we grow up unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus, and instead of heaven being a remote and mysterious unknown, heaven is brought near to us by the simple expedient of inspiring us where we now stand with its love, and purity, and its sacredness."

Christian Reader ! to you let it be a delightful thought, that the day is rapidly coming on, when, as to the *prophecies, they shall fail*, for they shall all, in their most glorious extent, be accomplished ! Though *now we see through a glass darkly*, then we shall behold Him whom the prophets foretold *face to face* : and though we now know in part, then *shall we know even as also we are known.*

CHAPTER XVII.

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT
OF PROPHECY.

GOD has given, through the deep and prolonged researches of his servants, much light into the prophetic writings. The most valuable light has been attained by increased investigation into the track of the older writers, with the farther light that history has afforded. Even the Jewish Rabbis, as well as the early writers of the Christian church, assisted Mede, the Father of modern interpretation. More, Cressener, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Woodhouse, &c. all followed, asking *for the old ways, and walking in them*. Some modern works have too much, however, disregarded what previous writers have said, and others have set them wholly aside, as groundless interpretations.

But even by the most defective works, men's minds have been exercised the more to find out the truth, and a hint in a very erroneous general interpretation, has sometimes led to a valuable discovery. So that no candid, diligent student need be discouraged by failures in times past.

The Author has given a much fuller List of writers on prophecy than he intended; but it may have its

advantages. Any knowledge of the writings of such varied Authors is calculated to lead us to CAUTION AND MODESTY, in the explanation of unfulfilled prophecy. The great lessons taught by so many varied interpretations, have already been noticed. Would there were more of a holy awe on all our minds, of intruding on the glories of him, who takes it as his peculiar character, to *declare things to come* (Isaiah xli. 22.) and to *show the things that are coming, and shall come*, Isaiah xlv. 7. We cannot and should not go a step farther than the Scripture leads us, and in the interpretation of that Scripture, it is very needful to keep every thing within that scriptural limit which the comparing of spiritual things with spiritual marks out.

The different interpretations of the servants of Christ are calculated also to guard against a PRECIPITATE JUDGMENT, and a hasty public expression of such a judgment. The first impressions of fresh views are as if a new light had been almost supernaturally given to us; but a little time for waiting may greatly modify these views.

No one can look at the names of the Authors in the following List without seeing, that questions of CHURCH GOVERNMENT and DOCTRINAL VIEWS are unconnected with any particular interpretation of Prophecy. Though, generally, sound scriptural principles are connected with the most valuable views of prophecy, yet it must be admitted that members of the most opposite denominations, and Christians holding very opposite sentiments in doctrine, often concur in the same views; and persons who are of the same denomination, or the same sentiments in doctrine, hold very opposing views of the same pro-

phcey. It is hoped that this may dispel the alarm which some have felt, as if an attention to the subject was necessarily connected with serious mistake in doctrines.

The error likely to arise from the great apparent plausibility of some interpretations may be checked by the similar plausibility of opposite interpretations, and we may be sure nothing but the true counterpart of history will meet all the lines drawn in the original Document of Prophecy.

It is by no means recommended to readers in general to attempt to procure, or to read all the books here mentioned. It would only tend to confuse and distract the mind. A few of the most really useful have already been mentioned, and some notices are given of others in the following list. Providence often graciously puts us in the way of books, and of guides really useful to us; only let us not follow a vain curiosity, or self-will, but look upward for divine direction.

Those who have most usefully and successfully written on Prophecy have, as it has been noticed, availed themselves of the expositions given by their predecessors. Dean Woodhouse, who began simply by studying it on his own resources, unaided except by Bishop Hurd's introduction, found it valuable afterwards to make free use of the stores provided by others. It is the remark of another not unsuccessful writer, "In almost all authors on this subject, I have met with something that appeared to me excellent; though differing in numerous instances from all, yet I have gathered a little from one, and a little from another."

The variety of new systems of the Apocalypse is a

serious evil, and it is hoped that the present List of Books may help to check this evil. Men of talents, and imagination, and piety, are in danger of forming to themselves a system of the Apocalypse, without any careful study of even leading writers, who have gone before them. With great ingenuity they turn the figures of this book to their own views, and build up a beautiful theory ; parts of which may indeed be true ; but not having cautiously gone over the ground, nor duly considered the researches of their predecessors, they lose the benefit of lengthened experience, and the church loses that full benefit, which their ability and piety, directed to the elucidation of this book, might have imparted. The warning against false prophets (Matt. xxiv. 21—24.) may teach both authors and readers, the danger of a false interpretation of prophecy, calculated to *deceive the very elect*.

It was the just remark of Sir Isaac Newton, a century back, "If the last age, the age of opening these things, be now approaching (as by the great success of late interpreters it seems to be) we have more encouragement than ever to look into these things. If the general preaching of the gospel be approaching, it is to us and our posterity that these words mainly belong ; *In the time of the end the wise shall understand.*"

The preaching of the gospel has taken place ; "the main revolution," which Newton mentions "as not yet come to pass," many believe has come to pass ; and the following List of Books will show how extensively the servants of Christ, in the last half century, have turned their attention to prophecy. The Book is sealed to the time of the end, but then *it is predicted, Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge*

shall be increased; and this List may show that these things are now taking place, and encourage every reader to a diligent study of prophecy.

GENERAL WORKS OF PROPHECY.

The principal JEWISH COMMENTATORS are Kimchi, Aben Ezra, Abarbanel, R. S. Jarchi, &c. Schoetgen, Stehelin's Rabbinical Literature (2 vols. 8vo. 1748), and Wotton's Discourses, give information on the religious notions of the Jews.

The views of THE FATHERS generally, on the subject of the Prophecies, must be sought for in the Commentaries which they have left on the various books of Scripture, and in incidental remarks in the earlier Fathers, who left no Commentaries, as Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, &c. The principal Commentators among the Fathers are Origen, Chrysostom, Eusebius, Jerom, Cyril, Ephraim Syrus Gregory, Hilary, Augustine, Theodoret, Theophylact, &c. In Origen's work against Celsus, he illustrates the prophecies concerning Christ.

The incidental testimonies of the early Fathers, Latin and Greek, especially those of the three first centuries, to the personal coming and reign of Christ, are quoted by Homes on the Millennium, Burnet, in his Theory of the Earth, Greswell, in the first volume of his work on the Parables, Anderson's Apology, and in the Prophetical periodicals. After the Roman Empire became professedly Christian, and then really Antichristian, the præ-millennial coming of Christ was discountenanced. Various testimonies to sentiments

similar to those of the early Fathers, from Jewish writers, and from the early Protestants, and their successors, are collected and given by Mr. Homes.

At the time of THE REFORMATION, and shortly afterwards, many valuable Commentaries were published on the Prophetical Books; and though writers generally præ-anticipated events, and many thought the Millennium past, and the day of judgment near, yet there is very much that is practical, holy, and useful in their Expositions, and it would have been well if more attention had been subsequently paid to the system of illustrating Scripture by exposition. There is a condensed view of the sentiments of the principal Reformers on those books, in the valuable Expositions of Marloratus on Genesis, the Psalms, Isaiah, and the New Testament.

The Reformers generally considered Popery as the Antichrist,¹ and this sentiment powerfully aided them in the great work of Reformation.

The commentaries of the Fathers, and Reformers, and the writings of Brightman, Napier, Alstedius, &c. preceded Mede, but his works were eminently lessed in reviving attention to prophecy.

MEDE (Jos). Works. Folio, 1677. His *Clavis Apocalyptica* was published in 1627.

Invaluable Expositions of various Prophecies, deserving and repaying the closest study.

MOLINÆI (P). Vates: 8vo. 1640.

¹ Calvin says, "Papistæ Antichristum imaginati sunt, per tres Annos et dimidium vexaturus sit Ecclesiam. Omnes notæ quibus Antichristum designat Spiritus, in Papa clare apparent: sed ille triennialis Antichristus Papistas tenet occupatos ne videndo videant." See *on 1 John ii. 18.*

TILLINGHAST (John). Generation Work. 3 Parts, 12mo. 1655. Knowledge of the Times. 12mo. 1654. Eight Last Sermons. 12mo. 1654.

Tillinghast is a superior writer, both in practical and Evangelical sentiment, and in prophetic knowledge, and though he prematurely applied predictions, his work contains much that is useful.

WILLIS (Thos.). A Word in season for a warning to England, or a Prophecy of perilous times opened and applied. 12mo. 1659.

An application of 2 Tim. iii. 1, to the times of the Author.

SMITH (J.) Discourses. See Discourse Six. 4to. 1673.

ALLEN (Wm). The State of the Church in Future Ages. 12mo. 1684.

JURIEU (Peter). Accomplishment of the Scripture Prophecies. 8vo. 3 Vols. 1687-8.

BEVERLEY (Thos.) Many Works, in 4to. from 1687 to 1701.

WITSII (Herm.) De Prophetis et Prophetia Misc. Sacra: 4to. 1692.

KORTHOLT (C). De Tribus Impostoribus. Herbert, Hobbes Spinosus. 4to. 1701.

MORE (Henry). Theological Works. folio. 1708.

Many illustrations of the prophecies in these works.

God's Judgments upon the Gentile Apostatized Churches. 8vo. 1713.

General Delusion of Christians touching God's way of revealing himself to the Prophets. 8vo. 1713.

VITRINGA (Comp.) Typus Doctrinæ Propheticae. 12mo. 1716

Like Vitringas's other works, rich in matter and unction.

WHISTON (Wm). The Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies. 8vo. 1708. Literal Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies. 8vo. 1724.

GURTLEI (N). Systema Theologiæ Propheticae. 4to. 1724.

A large collection of Prophecies and events supposed to fulfil them in all ages, arranged under periods; many useful thoughts.

HALLETT (Jos). Notes on Peculiar Texts of Scripture. 3 Vol. 8vo. 1729-36.

CHANDLER (Bp). Defence of Christianity, and Vindication. 3 Vols. 8vo. 1725-8.

Able and useful works.

BULLOCK (Thos.) The Reasoning of Christ and his Apostles, and Vindication. 2 Vols, 8vo. 1725-8.

- FLEMING** (Robt). *The Fulfilling of Scripture*. Folio. 1726.
- BURNET** (Thos). *Theory of the Earth*. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1728.
Some of the peculiarities of this writer have tended to discredit other scriptural doctrines which he supported.
- BERRIMAN** (W). *Gradual Revelation of the Gospel*. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1733.
- TWELLS** (Leonard). *Boyle Lectures*. 2 Vols. 1743.
- SHERLOCK** (Thos). *The Use and Intent of Prophecy*. 8vo. 1744.
- Dr. Middleton published an examination of this work, and was answered by Rutherford, Laurence, Jackson, and others.
- GILL** (John). *Six Sermons on Prophecy*. 8vo. 1750—1755.
(In his *Sermons and Tracts*, 3 vols. 8vo.)
- TAYLOR** (H.) *Thoughts on the Nature of the Grand Apostasy*. 8vo. 1781.
- ROTHERHAM** (John). *One great Argument formed from Several Concurring Evidences*. 8vo. 1753.
- CLAYTON** (Bp). *A Dissertation on Prophecy, with an Explanation of the Revelation*. 8vo. 1749.
- NEWTON** (Bp). *Dissertations on the Prophecies*. 8vo. 1754.
(Numerous Editions of this Eminently useful work.)
- SHARPE** (Greg). *Argument in Defence of Christianity*. 8vo. 1762.
- BOSSUET** (J. B). *His Abridgment of Universal History*. 12mo. 1768.
- His 30th chapter contains a striking view of the judgments on Jews and Gentiles.
- WORTHINGTON** (Wm). *The Evidence of Christianity throughout all Ages*. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1769.
- HARDY** (Sam). *Principal Prophecies of the Old and New Testament*. 8vo. 1770.
- HURD** (Richd). *An Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies*. 8vo. 1772.
Various editions of this useful work.
- SHARP** (Granville). *Remarks on several Prophecies*. 8vo. 1775.
- VENEMA** (Her). *Prædictiones de Methodo Prophetica*. 4to. 1775.
- BAGOT** (Bp). *Warburton Lectures*. 8vo. 1780.
- CHURTON** (Ralph). *Bampton Lectures on the Destruction of Jerusalem*. 8vo. 1785.

KING (Edw). Morsels of Criticism. 2 Vols. 4to. 1788—1800.

LOWTH (Bp). Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews.
2 Vols. 8vo. 1787.

APTHORP (East). Discourses on Prophecy. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1786.

FRASER (Alex). A Key to the Prophecies of the Old and New
Testaments, which are not yet accomplished. 8vo. 1795.

WINTLE (Thos). Bampton Lectures on Christian Redemption.
8vo. 1795.

WHITTAKER (E. W). View of the Prophecies, relative to the
Times of the Gentiles. 12mo. 1795.

KING (Ed). Remarks on the Signs of the Times. 4to. 1798-9.

ZOUCH (Thos). An Attempt to Illustrate Prophecies of the
Old and New Testament. 12mo. 1800.

RICHARDS (Geo). Bampton Lectures, Origin of Prophecy.
8vo. 1800.

DOBBS (J). Concise View of Predictions Fulfilled and Fulfilling.
8vo. 1800:

BROWN (John). Harmony of Scripture Prophecies. 12mo.
1800.

A valuable work.

KETT (Henry). History the Interpreter of Prophecy. 8vo.
1801.

NARES (Robt). Warburton Lectures. Connected View of
Prophecies. 8vo. 1805.

PIRIE (Alex). Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works. 6 Vols.
12mo. 1805.

Many useful thoughts in them.

BICHENO (J). Destiny of the German Empire. 8vo. 1806.

BICHENO (J). Signs of the Times. 4 Parts. 8vo. 1808-17.

ETTRICK (W). Second Exodus, or the Prophecies of the Last
Times. 3 Vols. 8vo. 1811-12.

WINCHESTER (E). Lectures on Prophecies to be fulfilled. 4
Vols. 8vo. 1833.

Some of the principles unsound.

SIMPSON (David). A Key to the Prophecies. 8vo. 1815.

A useful introductory work.

FRERE (J. H). Combined View of the Prophecies. 8vo. 1815.

Structure of the Apocalypse. 1826. Letters 1831-3.

Mr. Cuningham has published strictures on this work.

HALES (Wm.). A Synopsis of the Signs of the Times. 8vo. 1817.

ROBERTS (Peter). Manual of Prophecy. 8vo. 1818.

BROWN (J. A.). The Even Tide. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1823.

New and questionable interpretations; but with valuable hints.
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PENN (Gran). Christian Survey of Prophecy. 12mo. 1824.

COOPER (Edw.). The Crisis. 12mo. 1826.

MAITLAND (S. R.). Inquiries into the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John. 1826-9. Letter to Rev. W. Digby. 1831.

An acute searcher into the foundation of preceding interpretations, but in the Author's view, difficulties are raised on insufficient grounds.

See Cuninghame's Reply.

Dialogues on Prophecy. 3 Vols. 8vo. 1828.

IRVING (Ed). The Last Days. 8vo. 1828.

TOWERS (Dr). Illustrations of Prophecy. 8vo. 1828.

Leavened with a republican spirit. See Investigator, vol. 3. p. 152.

MARSH (W). Plain Thoughts on Prophecy. 8vo. 1828.

COLE (J. W). Commentary on the Prophecies. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1828.

HAMILTON (Dr). Defence of the Scriptural Doctrine of the Second Advent. 12mo. 1828.

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MORNING WATCH. 7 Vols. 1829-32.

Some useful Papers on the Discursive Prophecies, but much that is peculiar to Mr. Irving in the doctrines stated in this work.

LEE (Professor). Six Sermons and Dissertations on the Interpretations of Prophecy, with Exposition of Revelation. 8vo. 1830.

Founded upon the old and unsatisfactory system of an early fulfilled Revelation.

HALES (Wm.) New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy. 4 Vols. 8vo. 1830.

A very elaborate work, adopting the Chronology of Josephus.

FABER (G. S). Sacred Calendar of Prophecy. 3 Vols. 8vo. 1830. Much varied learning and research; but sometimes speculative and unsatisfactory. See Mr. Cuninghame's Critical Examination.

The confidence with which Mr. Faber states his present conclusions, seems remarkable on comparing them with his former opinions.

WHITELEY (John). Scheme and Completion of Prophecy. 8vo. 1830.

VAN MILDERT (Bp). Rise and Progress of Infidelity. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1831.

DIGBY (Wm). Treatise on the 1260 Days of Daniel and St. John. 12mo. 1831.

THORP (Wm). The Destinies of the British Empire. 8vo. 1831.
An awakening Work.

WOOD (G. H). The Believer's Guide in Unfulfilled Prophecy 8vo. 1831.

ANDERSON (Will.) Apology for Millennial Doctrine. Parts I. and II. 1830-1.

An able writer, calculated to remove prejudices.

VINT (W). New Illustrations of Prophecy. 8vo. 1831.

PLATT (T. P). Thoughts on the Prophecies. 8vo. 1832.

ROSE (Sir George). Scriptural Researches. 18mo. 1832.

Some interesting and striking typical illustrations. See the account of China and Africa.

CUNINGHAME (W). Strictures on Mr. Maitland's Four Pamphlets. 8vo. 1832. Political Destiny of the Earth. Jubilean Chronology. 1834. Letter to the Editor of the Investigator. 1834.

All Mr. C's works deserve consideration.

SMITH (J. P). Sermon on the Interpretation of Prophecy. 8vo. 1831.

See Monthly Lectures on Prophecy also, by Fletcher, Orme, Collyer, Burder, Vaughan, Morrison, Dobson, &c. &c.

HOLMES (W. A). The Time of the End, on Prophetic Chronology. 12mo. 1833.

KEITH (Alex). Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion. 8vo. 1834. The signs of the Times. 2 vols. 12mo. 1832. The first is a very useful work. "The Signs of the Times" is less to be trusted. The work on the evidence is founded on Bishop Newton's Dissertations, with farther proofs of the fulfilment of the Prophecies from modern and even infidel travellers.

MAITLAND (S. R). Reply to the Strictures of W. Cuninghame Esq. 8vo. 1834.

See notice of this writer's works in the preceding page.

HABERSHON (M). A Dissertation on the Prophetic Scriptures, 8vo. 1834. Abridged, price 1s. 6d. 1835.

Mr. Habershon supposes different commencements and terminations of the same periods. It is written in a practical and Christian spirit, and well deserves attention for its truly pious and important remarks.

Dublin CHRISTIAN HERALD, 1830—1834. 5 Vols. 8vo.

It is to be regretted that this work has ceased.

INVESTIGATOR. 3 Vols. 8vo. 1832-3-4.

Much useful information in this work. It is published quarterly, and is now, I believe, the only periodical publication on prophecy exclusively. Though the infusion of what the author deems private views, is to be regretted, yet it deserves the larger support of the Christian church, and will well repay study. The author has been much indebted to it in this work, and only wishes to see the editor using more his own judgment in excluding novelties.

THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER, and the JEWISH EXPOSITOR, contain in past years many valuable papers on Prophecy.

A vast number of other books might be added, such as the writings of Addis, Bernard, R. Clarke, Cluverus, Cradock, Du Jon, Hares, Hoblyn, Holland, Huet, Hurdis, King, Lawrie, Loys, Macleod, Marwick, Marshall, Mead, Newans, Pyle, Reader, Townes, Thruston, Ward, &c. Vitringa mentions Gulichus, Monuna, Heidegger, and Tillius as valuable writers.

ON THE MESSIAH.

EUSEBII (P). *Demonstratio Evangelica*. fo. 1628.

GUILD (Wm). *Moses Unveiled: the Harmony of the Prophets*. 12mo. 1658.

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KIDDER (Bishop). *Demonstration of the Messiah*. fo. 1726.
Directed to convince the Jews. Much Jewish learning.

GILL (John). *The Prophecies of the Old Testament literally fulfilled in Jesus*. 8vo. 1728.

GILLIES (John). *Essays on the Prophecies relating to the Messiah*. 8vo. 1773.

MACLAURIN (John). *Essay on the Prophecies relating to the Messiah*. 8vo. 1778.

HALLS (W). *Dissertations on the principal Prophecies*. 8vo. 1808.

LEVI (David). *Dissertations on the Prophecies of the Old Testament*. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1793-6, and 1817.

Contains the views of the modern Jews.

CUNINGHAME (W). Remarks on David Levi's Dissertation. 8vo. 1810.

ROBINSON (Thomas). Prophecies on Messiah. 8vo. 1812.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

DURANT (John). Salvation of the Saints by the Appearances of Christ. 12mo. 1653.

Very spiritual and edifying.

ALLIX (P). De Messia Duplici Adventu. 12mo. 1701.

GALE (Th). A Discourse concerning Christ's Second Coming. 8vo. 1673.

A very practical and useful work, but not Millenarian directly.

NISBETT (N). Coming of the Messiah. 8vo. 1802.

A laboured attempt to confine the descriptions of Christ's coming and the apostacy, in the Gospels and Epistles to the first coming, and 2 Thess. ii. to the rebellions of the Jews.

Review of Scripture, in Testimony of the Truth of the Second Advent. 8vo. 1818.

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FRY (John). The Second Advent, or Glorious Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1822.

JONES (J. E). Scriptural Doctrine of the Judgment to come. 8vo. 1824.

Anti-Millenarian; answered by Mr. Bayford.

BEN EZRA (J. J). The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1827.

STEWART (J. H). Sermons on the Advent of Christ. 8vo. 1827.

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Noah's Day. 8vo. 1833.

Practical and useful.

SABIN (J. E.). The Judgment of the Quick. 12mo. 1831.

BURGH (Wm.). Lectures on the Second Advent. 8vo. 1832.

See a Review of this in the Dublin Christian Examiner. This was answered by Mr. Cuninghame (with too much sharpness, but ably) in his Church of Rome the Apostacy.

REED (Andrew). The Final Judgment. 8vo. 1832.

Opposed to Millennarian views.

CUNINGHAME (Wm.). Præmillennial Advent. 12mo. 1833.

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JUSTIN (the Martyr). Dialogue with Trypho, translated by Brown. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1755.

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GOUGE (Wm.). The World's Great Restoration, on the Calling of the Jews. 4to. 1621.

MATON (Robert). Israel's Redemption Redeemed, or Jews' General Conversion. 4to. 1646.

WALL (Moses). Considerations on the Conversion of the Jews. 1651.

MATHER (Increase). The Mystery of Israel's Salvation. 12mo. 1669.

Much learning, judgment, and information.

CALVERT (James). Napthali; de reditu decem tribuum, &c. 4to. 1672.

An able statement of the system that the ten tribes returned after the Babylonian Captivity. The Controversy was fully discussed in the Investigator. Vol. IV. p 31, and 208—225.

BURROUGHS (Jer). *Jerusalem's Glory Breaking Forth*. 12mo. 1675.

ALTINGII (J). *Spes Israelis*. 4to. 1676.

This is included in his *Works*, 5 Vols. 8vo.

FLETCHER (Giles). *Israel Redux, or the Restoration of Israel*. 24mo. 1677.

ALLIX (Peter). *Confutation of the Hope of the Jews, concerning the last Redemption*. 8vo. 1707.

CLAYTON (Bp). *Enquiry into the Time of the Coming of the Messiah, and the Restoration of the Jews*. 3 Parts. 1751.

EYRE (Jos). *Observations on their Restoration*. 8vo. 1771.

Extracts published by the Rev. C. S. Hawtrey.

CHURTON (R). *Prophecy respecting the Destruction of Jerusalem*. 8vo. 1785.

BICHENO (J). *Restoration of the Jews the Crisis of all Nations*. 8vo. 1800, 1807.

WITHERBY (Thos). *Observations on Mr. Bicheno's Book*. 8vo. 1804.

FABER (G. S). *A General and Connected View of the Prophecies relative to Judah and Israel*. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1809.

SCOTT (Thomas). *Restoration of Israel, in answer to Rabbi Crooll*. 8vo. 1814.

An excellent work.

CUNINGHAME (Wm). *Letters and Essays on the Conversion and Restoration of Israel*. 8vo. 1822.

STEWART (John). *Two Sermons on the Past, Present, and Future State of the Jews*. 8vo. 1825.

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PROPHETIC BLESSINGS of Jacob and Moses respecting the Twelve Tribes. Rivingtons. 12mo. 1831.

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An interesting account of the state of the Jews at the time of the Crusades.

SERMONS preached before the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.

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- HIPPOLYTUS.** De Antichristo, in his Works. fo. 1516.
- LUTHER (M).** De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiæ. Adversus Papatum Romæ a Sathana fundatum. 4to. 1545.
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- FRITH (John).** Revelation of Antichrist. 8vo. 1529.
- GRESSOP (Thos).** A Treatise on the Pope's Usurped Primacy, by Nilus. 8vo. 1560.
- DANÆUS (Lambert).** Traité de l'Antichrist, 12mo. 1577. Translated by J. Swan. fo. 1589.
- FULKE (Wm).** De Successione et Ecclesia latente, ab Antichristi tyrannide. 8vo. 1584.
- DOWNNAME (Bp).** A Treatise proving that the Pope is Antichrist. 4to. 1603.
- ABBOT (Robt).** Antichristi Demonstratio, 4to. 1603.
- FERRIER (Jer).** De l'Antichrist et ses Marques. 1615.
- SHARP (Lionel).** Looking-glass for the Pope, the image of Antichrist. 4to. 1616.
- MALVENDA (Thos).** De Antichristo. fo. 1621.
An able Jesuit. His work contains the opinions of the Fathers.
- BEARD (Thos).** Antichrist the Pope of Rome. 4to. 1625.
- GROTIUS (H).** Comm. ad loca quæ de Antichristo agunt 8vo. 1640.
- GARRETT (Walter).** Discourse concerning Antichrist. 8vo. 1680.
- MARESII (S).** de Antichristo quâ refutatur. Comm. H. Grotii. 12mo. 1640.
- HALL (Edmund).** Discourse of Apostacy and Antichrist. 4to. 1653.
- HAUGHTON (E.)** The Rise, Growth, and Fall of Antichrist. 8vo. 1652.
- MANTON (Thos).** On 2 Thess. xi. The Rise, Growth, and Fall of Antichrist. 8vo. 1679.

NESS (Chris). Discovery of the Person and Period of Antichrist. 1679. 8vo.

HEIDEGGERI (J. H). Historia Papatus. 4to. 1684.

COMBER (Thos). Roman Forgeries during the first Six Centuries. 4to. 1689-95.

CRESSENER (Drue). Judgments of God on the Roman Catholic Church. 4to. 1689.

A very useful work.

BARLOW (Bp). Whether the Pope be Antichrist. 1690.

COCCEI (J). De Ecclesia et Babylone; de Antichristo—in his Works, Vol. 9. fo. 1700.

FLEMING (Robert). A new Account of the Rise and Fall of the Papacy. 8vo. 1701.

DANT (J. M). Approaching Judgments of God on the Roman Empire. Translated from the Dutch, by B. Furly. 8vo. 1711.

A visionary work: not founded on God's word.

CALMET (Aug). Dissertation sur l'Ante-Christ. fo. 1726.

In his Commentary, vol. 8. p. 351. a discussion and statements of the sentiments of the Fathers, and views of the Romanists.

The Religion of Antichrist Discovered. 8vo. 1770.

HALIFAX (Samuel). Twelve Sermons at Warburton's Lectures. 8vo. 1776.

TAYLOR (H). Thoughts on the Grand Apostacy. 8vo. 1781.
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ALLWOOD (Ph). Warburton Lectures. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1816.

FLETCHER (J). Sermon on Antichrist. 8vo. 1824.

IRVING (Edward). Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed to Fall. 8vo. 1827.

VAUGHAN (Robert). Discourse on the Papal Apostacy.

RILAND (John). Antichrist, Papal, Protestant, and Infidel. 12mo. 1828.

Practical and awakening.

MAITLAND (S. R). Prophecies concerning Antichrist. 8vo. 1831.

CUNINGHAME (W). The Church of Rome the Apostacy. 12mo. 1833.

A valuable exposition of the prophecy in 2 Thess. ii.

FABER (G. S). Recapitulated Apostacy the true Rationale of the concealed Name of the Roman Empire. 12mo. 1833.

Mr. Faber brings varied arguments to show that *αἰὼς αἰών* is the name intended by St. John.

ON THE MILLENNIUM AND FIRST RESURRECTION.

HUMPHREYS (David). The Apologetics of Athenagoras. With a Dissertation concerning the Jewish Notion of the Resurrection. 8vo. 1714.

MENASSEH (Ben Israel). De Resurrectione Mortuorum. 8vo. 1636.

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ALSTRDIUS (). Diatriba de mille Annis. 4to. 1643.

PETRIE (Alex). Chiliastro, Mastix, the Kingdom of our Saviour Vindicated from the misrepresentations of the Millennarians. 4to. 1644.

This was answered in Maton's Israel's Redemption redeemed.

TILLINGHAST (John). On the Millennium. 12mo. 1655.

A SOBER INQUIRY, or Christ's Reign with his Saints a Thousand Years, modestly asserted from the Scripture. 8vo. 1660.¹

¹ The agreement of Christians respecting the personal coming of our Lord is so interesting a point, that I cannot forbear quoting a statement of it, as given in the Preface to the "Sober Inquiry, or Christ's reign with his Saints," "All agree that,"—

(1) Jesus Christ will come personally, visibly, and corporeally from heaven to earth, at the day of judgment. Acts i. 3; Job xix. 25.

(2) When Christ thus comes, he will bring with him the souls of all his saints, according to Zech. xiv. 5; and 1 Thess. iii. 13.

(3) Their bodies shall be immediately raised out of their graves, and the soul and body joined and united together; and though the soul continues, remains, and is in heaven without the body, yet on earth it shall not be so.

(4) When it is thus raised in glory. 1 Cor. xv. 42; Col. iii. 4; and not thenceforth subject any more to sin or sorrow, to mutation or mortality, to the want of meat or drink, or clothing, or houses, or marriages, or any other comfort, but shall be as the angels. Mark xii. 25.

(5) This resurrection of the saints shall be sometime before the resurrection of the wicked, they shall have the preeminence, and be the first in order and time, (I say not how long) and the wicked shall not rise till some time, more or less, afterwards. 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. xx. 4—6.

OXENBRIDGE (John). *A Double Watchword, or the Duty of Watching, and Watching to Duty.* 8vo. 1661.

MULTUM IN PARVO, or the Jubilee of Jubilees, being a Description of the Great Millennium. 8vo. 1732.

SPES FIDELIUM, or the Believer's Hope; a Dissertation proving the Thousand Years' Reign of Christ. By a Presbyter of the Church of England—supposed to be Dr. Grabe or Dr. Lee. 8vo. 1714.

SHERWIN (W). *Several Tracts from 1665, to 1667.* In 4to. by him.

HOMES (Nath). *The Resurrection Revealed.* Folio. 1654. *Miscellanea Sacra.* Folio. 1666.

A valuable work. A reply was published by M. Hall. 12mo.

FLEMING (Robt). In his *Christology*. Vol. 3. A Dissertation on the first Resurrection. 8vo. 1708.

WHITBY (Dan). *On the Millennium.* 1718. (On his Commentary.)

THE CHIEF WRITERS FOR A MILLENNIUM, AND SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

BURNET (Thos). *State of the dead, and those that are to Rise.* 2 Vols. 8vo. 1728.

(6) The Lord Jesus will be some time in judging the world. He will not hurry all over in a moment, but make some stay on the earth, not as though he had need of time; but as he took a space of time in creation, so he will take some space of time on earth to do what he will then do to judge and conclude all things.

(7) While Christ stays on the earth (let it be a longer or a lesser time) the saints also must stay, and not go to heaven, until Christ goes and carries them up with him.

(8) It must needs be a very glorious time, while it lasts, when Christ shall have removed his court from heaven to earth, and be in his glory, attended with angels, environed with all his saints, who are also all of them in their glory. O how can such a time be, while it lasts, less than a glorious time.

(9) The only difference will be in the length or time how long this day of judgment or kingdom of Christ, or reign of the saints shall last."

It must also, however, be added, that, by the too generally accredited system of a 1000 years intervening before the coming of Christ, a most material difference is made; so as greatly to interfere with the direct practical use of his coming again.

- RUDD (Sayer).** Essay towards a new Explication of the Doctrines of the Resurrection and Millennium. 8vo. 1734.
Several useful thoughts.
- EDWARDS (Jon).** Sermon on Rev. v. 6. 1738.
- APOCALYPTICA Cabala; a History of the Millennium.** 8vo. 1741.
- GREENHILL (Jos).** Several Sermons and Tracts, from 1755 to 1774. 8vo.
- HARTLEY (Thos.)** Paradise Restored. 8vo. 1764.
- BELLAMY (Jos).** Sermon on the Millennium. 12mo. 1787.
- BAGGS (John),** Scriptural View of the Millennium. 8vo. 1797.
- CORRODI (H).** A Critical History of Chiliasm. Zurich. 4 Vols. 8vo.
- BINGHAM (Geo).** An Essay on the Millennium. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1804.
- LAMBERT (le P).** Exposition des Predictions, et des Promesses, faites à l'Eglise, pour les derniers temps de la Gentilite. 2 Vols. 12mo. 1806.
A striking testimony to the præ-millennial advent, restoration of the Jews, and reign of Christ, by a French Roman Catholic.
- HOPKINS (S).** On the Millennium. 12mo. 1806.
- TAYLOR (Thos).** Discourses on the Millennium. 12mo. 1809.
- BOGUE (David).** On the Millennium. 8vo. 1818.
There are some just remarks on this work, in Vint's New Illustration of Prophecy.
- HAWTREY (C. S).** The First Resurrection, by a Spiritual Watchman. 12mo. 1820.
- SHERWOOD (Mrs).** The Millennium. 12mo. 1830. The Latter Days. 12mo. 1833.
- NOLAN (F).** The Time and Nature of the Millennium. 8vo. 1831.
- JACKSON (J. L).** The Holy Catholics, and Millennial Church. 12mo. 1831.
- PYM (W).** Thoughts on Millennarianism. Third Edition. 1831.
- BEGG (James A).** Connected View of the Scriptural Evidence of the Redeemer's Return and Reign. 12mo. 1831.
- MEJANEL (Pierre).** Les Derniers Convulsions, du Monde perissant. 8vo. 1831.
- GIPPS (H).** A Treatise on the First Resurrection. 12mo. 1831.
Mr. Gipps thinks that it is only a spiritual resurrection. It is the best treatise on that side of the question, and written by a Devoted Christian.

SIRR (J. D'Arcy). First Resurrection Considered; a Reply to a Treatise of the late H. Gipps. 12mo. 1833.

An able answer to Mr. Gipps' Treatise.

COX (John). Millenarian's Answer of his Hope. 1832.

CUNINGHAME (W). Review of Dr. Wardlaw's Sermon. 12mo. 1833.

BIDDULPH (T. T). An Essay on the Doctrine of the First Resurrection, 8vo. 1834.

Though the author has come to a different conclusion, he gladly records that the strength of the argument for a spiritual resurrection is here stated in the meekness of wisdom and love.

ANDERSON (W). A Letter to the Author of Millenarianism Indefensible. 12mo. 1834.

GRESWELL (Edw). Exposition of the Parables. 8vo. 6 Vols. 1834.

A valuable defence of the Millennium in the First Volume.

Short Treatise on the Millennium; showing the Reign of Christ to be Spiritual. 12mo. 1834.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

IRENEI (D). Opera. Folio. See especially his 5th Book against Heresies. Folio.

LACTANTI (L. C). Opera. 8vo. See Book 7, of his Divine Institutions on the Blessed Life hereafter.

ARCHER (John). The Personal Reign of Christ on Earth. 4to. 1643.

HAMMON (G). Truth and Innocency. On the Personal Reign. 4to. 1650.

MATON (Robt). Treatise of Fifth Monarchy; or Christ's personal Reign on Earth. 1665.

KNOLLIS (H). Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven expounded. 12mo. 1674.

STERRY (Peter). The Rise, Race, and Royalty of the Kingdom of God, and the Appearances of God to Man. 2 Vols. 4to. 1683—1710.

MATHER (J). Discourse Concerning Faith and Fervency in Prayer, and the glorious kingdom of the Lord. 24mo. 1710.

PERRY (W). Glory of Christ's Visible Kingdom. 12mo. 1721. Contains an exposition of the principal texts upon the subject, plain, practical, and often sensible; but anticipating the time.

HORT (Robt). A Sermon on the glorious Kingdom of Christ. 8vo. 1748.

CLARKE (Alex). View of the glory of Messiah's Kingdom. 8vo. 4763.

KOPPII (J. B). Excursus in Epist. Pauli ad Thessalon. 8vo. 1791.

Given also in the Investigator.

BAYFORD (John). Messiah's Kingdom. 8vo. 1820.

SABIN (J. E). The Kingship of Jesus. 12mo. 1832.

COMMENTATORS.

The Author has, in his Christian Student, given full Lists of Commentators on the Scriptures in general; and such Lists may be found in Hartwell Horne, Orme's Bibliotheca, &c. He has already also mentioned the Fathers, and Reformers. His object here is to name only such as give fuller attention to, or are more useful in the interpretation of the Prophetical scriptures. Gill, Scott, and most other Commentators, illustrate the more direct Prophetical Writings.

WHOLE BIBLE.

COCCEI (J). Commentarii in Sacras Scripturas. Folio. 12 Vols. 1706.

"Often fanciful, but learned, pious, and far more discerning in the true scope of prophecy, than many who succeeded him." Apthorp. Religious Tract Society Commentary. 6 Vols. 12mo.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HORSLEY (Sam). Biblical Criticism. 4 Vols. 8vo. 1820. Sermons 8vo. 1826. Letters in the British Magazine, for 1834. Sermons, &c.

Bishop Horsley's works in general throw much light on Prophecy, though he is dogmatic, and sometimes speculative, and uses inconclusive argument.

JARCHI (R. S). Commentarius Hebraicus, Latine versus a J. F. Breithaupto. 1710—14. 3 Vols. 4to.

DURELL (David). Prophecies of Jacob and Moses. Hebrew Translation and Notes. 4to. 1764.

PSALMS.

KIMCHI (David). *Commentarii*. 4to. 1666.

ALLIX (Peter). *The Book of Psalms, with the Argument of each, and a Preface on their Interpretation*. 8vo. 1701.

HORSLEY (Bp). *The Book of Psalms, Translated with Notes*. 8vo. 1824.

Many original and useful hints, but adventurous.

FRY (John) *New Translation of*. 8vo. 1819.

Containing illustrations of the prophetic character of the Psalms, on the plan of Bishop Horsley, and Mr. Allix.

CANTICLES.¹

DAVIDSON (Wm). *Explanations of the Song of Solomon*. 8vo. 1817,

ALSTEDIUS (J. H). *Trifolium Propheticum*. *Cantici, Daniel, Apocalypsis*. 4to. 1640.

BRIGHTMAN (Thos). *A Commentary on the Canticles*, 4to. 1644.

Viewed Prophetically.

FRY (John). *Song of Solomon*. 8vo. 1825.

DURHAM (James). *Clavis Cantica*. 4to. 1668.

PROPHETS.

POCOCK (Edw). *Commentary on Hosea, Joel, Micah, Malachi*. Folio. 1691-2.

¹ Among the varied views taken of this Mystical Book, the Author most acquiesces in that which considers it as a beautiful allegory, prophetic of the state of the Church, and also subserving a rich exhibition of Christian experience. "By the received, and then authorized usage of Polygamy," says Aphthorp, "the mystic King is represented as having contracted a double marriage, first, with a Jewish queen, and afterwards with a Gentile princess, the daughter of the King of Egypt, the fittest type of idolatrous superstition, and under the figure of the two queens are expressed the different fortunes, the emulation, and final concord of the Jewish and Gentile churches." To this statement I would only add, that in the mean while, for the instruction, quickening, and comfort of all, it portrays in a most lively way, the varied experience, feelings, and desires of the individual believer towards his beloved Saviour.

LOWTH (Willm). A Commentary upon the Larger and Lesser Prophets. Folio. 1739.

Many valuable hints on the Prophecies.

NEWCOME (Abp). Improved Version of the Twelve Minor Prophets. 8vo. 1785 and 1809.

SMITH (John). Summary View of the Prophets. 12mo. 1787.

DRUSIUS (J). Lectiones in XII. Prophetas Minores. 8vo. 1627.

PICK (A). A Literal Translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets, with Notes from Jewish Writers. 1833:

ISAIAH.

WHITE (Samuel). A Commentary where the Literal Sense of the Prophecies are Briefly Explained. 4to. 1609.

An ultra literalist, but not without his use; follows Grotius,

VITRINGA (Camp). Commentarius in Librum Isaïæ. Folio. 1714—1720.

LOWTH (Bp). A new Translation of. 1778.

Various Editions.

FRASER (Alex). A Commentary on. Being a Paraphrase with Notes, Shewing the Meaning of the Prophecy. 8vo. 1800.

JENOUR (Alfred). A New Translation. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1832.

JEREMIAH.

VENEMA (Herman). Commentarii ad Librum Jeremiæ. 2 Vols. 4to. 1765.

BLAYNEY (Benj). A New Translation with Notes. 8vo. 1810.

EZEKIEL.

ALLEINE (Wm). The Mystery of the Temple and City of Ezekiel described. 12mo. 1679.

MEADE (Mat.) The Vision of the Wheels opened and applied. 12mo. 1689.

NEWCOME (Abp). An Improved Version and Explanation. 4to. 1788.

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PENN (Gran). The Prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog. 8vo. 1814.

GREENHILL (W). Exposition of Ezekiel. 5 Vols. 4to. 1645-58.
Very scarce. It is practical and useful.

BENNET (Sol). The Temple of Ezekiel Elucidated. 4to. 1824.

DANIEL.

JACHIADE (J). Paraphrasis in Daniele. 4to. 1633.

BRIGHTMAN (Thomas). Exposition of the last part of Daniel. 4to. 1644.

PARKER (Thomas). Visions and Prophecy expounded. 4to. 1646.

CANNE (John). The Time of the End. 8vo. 1658.

MORE (Henry). Exposition of Daniel. 4to. 1611.

There were remarks on this and his book on the Apocalypse, in 1690, 4to.

GEIERI (M). Prælectiones Academicæ. fo. 1696.

THE VISION AND PROPHECIES OF DANIEL Explained according to the measure of the Gift of Christ. 12mo. 1700.
Many useful remarks in this book, written by a humble, devout, and spiritually-minded Christian, not holding a præ-millennial advent.

WELLS (Henry). Commentary on. 4to. 1716.

NEWTON (Sir Isaac). Observations on the Prophecies. 4to. 1733, 8vo. 1832.

Very valuable.

VENEMA (Herman). Dissertations. 2 Vols. 4to. 1745, 1752.

CAVERHILL (Dr). Explanation of the Seventy Weeks. 8vo. 1777.

WINTLE (Thomas). An Improved Version and Notes. 4to. 1792.

ZOUCH (Thomas). An Inquiry into the Prophetic Character of the Romans; Dan. viii. 23. 8vo. 1792.

FABER (G. S). Dissertation on the 70 Weeks. 8vo. 1811.

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IRVING (Edward). Discourses on Daniel's Four Beasts. 8vo. 1830.

COX (F.A.). Outlines of Lectures on Daniel. 8vo. 1833.

HOSEA.

Hosea cum Comment. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, et Kimchi. 4to. 1621.

CODDÆUS (W). Annotationes in Comment. trium Rabbiorum. 4to. 1621.

HORSLEY (Bp.). Translation with Notes. 4to. 1804. (Included also in his Biblical Criticism.)

ZECHARIAH.

FLOYER (Sir John). Comment on Zechariah and Malachi. 8vo. 1721.

MALACHI.

VENEMA (Herm). Commentarius. 4to. 1759.

NEW TESTAMENT.

(See Commentaries in the Author's Christian Student.)

HARDMAN (). Explanatory and Practical Comments on the New Testament. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1830-32.

Several useful hints on prophetic passages.

NEWCOME (Abp.). An attempt towards Revising our English Translation of the Greek Scriptures, or the New Covenant Jesus Christ. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1796.

Archbishop Newcome here asserts the personal coming and reign of our Lord, and first resurrection of his saints.

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WHITAKER (E. W). *Survey of the Doctrine and Arguments of St. Peter's Epistles.* 12mo. 1666.

REVELATION.

ARETHÆ, Cæsareæ *Explanatones in Apocalypsim. At the end of Œcumenius's Commentaries in 2 Vols.* fo. 1581.
He flourished about the seventh century.

BULLINGER (Henry). *A Hundred Sermons on.* 4to. 1573.

MARLORATE (Aug). *A Catholic Exposition.* 4to. 1574.

NAPIER (John, Baron). *A Plain Discovery.* 4to. 1593.

COWPER (Bp). *Commentary on Revelation.* fo. 1623.

DENT (Arthur). *The Ruin of Rome.* 4to. 1607.

ALCAZAR (Louis). *Vestigatio Arcani sensus.* fo. 1619.

He also published a *Commentary on the Old Testament, as connected with the Apocalypse,* fo. 1631.

MEDE (Jos). *Clavis Apocalyptica (in his Works).*

A translation by More, 4to. 1643, and by R. B. Cooper, in 1833.

GOODWIN (Thos). *An Exposition upon the Revelation.* 1639.

In the second volume of his works, in folio.

COTTON (John). *The Pouring out of the Seven Vials.* 4to. 1642.

Exposition of Revelation xiii. 4to. 1655.

POTTER (Francis). *The Interpretation of the Number 666.* 4to. 1642.

PAREUS (D). *Commentary by Arnold.* fo. 1644.

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First published in Latin, in 1609.

STEPHENS (Nath). Calculation of the Name and Number of the Beast. 4to. 1656.

HALL (Bp). Revelation Unrevealed. 18mo. 1650.

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MORE (Henry). Exposition of the Epistles to the Seven Churches. 12mo. 1369.

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MORE (Henry). Exposition. 4to. 1680.

HEIDEGGERI (J. H). In Apocalypseos Diatribæ. 2 Vols. 4to. 1687.

A valuable writer.

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A learned Romanist. Full details of sentiments of previous writers.

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Some useful hints in this work. He treads in the steps of Mede, and holds the personal coming before the Millennium.

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VITRINGA (Camp). Anacrisis Apocalypseos. 4to. 1719.

A very valuable Commentary.

DAUBUZ (Charles). Perpetual Commentary. fo. 1720. New Modelled and Abridged, by Peter Lancaster. 4to. 1730.

Much valuable matter in this work.

ROBERTSON (J). Exposition. fo. 1730.

NEWTON (Sir Isaac). Observations on the Apocalypse. 4to. 1733.

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A summary translated by Robertson, 8vo. 1757.

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- CLARKE (J. E). *Dissertation on the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet, and on Daniel's Vision of the Ram and He-Goat*. 8vo. 1814.
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- HOLMES (J. J). *Fulfilment of the Revelation*. 8vo. 1819.
- GAUNTLETT (Henry). *An Exposition*. 8vo. 1821.
Compiled chiefly from Scott and Faber. Practical and anti-millennarian.
- MURRAY (R). *Introduction to the Study of*. 8vo. 1826.
- CULBERTSON (Robert). *Lectures Expository and Practical*. 3 Vols. 8vo. 1826.
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- KEYWORTH (Thos). *Exposition of the Revelation*. 8vo. 1828.
- JONES (Wm). *Lectures on the Apocalypse*. 8vo. 1830.
- MILNER (I). *History of the Seven Churches, designed to show the Fulfilment of Prophecy*. 8vo. 1831.
- IRVING (Ed). *Exposition of the Revelation*. 4 Vols. 1828.
See Mr. Cuninghame's structures on this.
- GIRDLESTON (Henry). *An Analytical Comment on the First Part of Revelation*. 8vo. 1833.
A very valuable work.
- COOPER (R. B): *A Commentary on the Revelation*. 8vo. 1833.
- CUNINGHAME (Wm). *A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets*. 1884. Third Edition. 8vo. 1833.
One of the most valuable expositions of this Book.
- BURGH (Wm). *The Apocalypse Unfulfilled*. 12mo. 1833-34.
An attempt to set aside all preceding expositions of the fulfilment of this book; in the author's opinion on very unsatisfactory and insufficient grounds; yet with practical and useful Remarks.
- ASHE (Isaac). *The Book of Revelation, with Notes*. 5s. 1834.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE Author, having in page 199, included the names of Archbishop Newcome, Daubuz, and Bishop Newton, as holding that the spiritual coming of Christ is intended in our Lord's Discourse in Matt. xxiv., thinks it right to notice, that they all held the idea of a literal first resurrection, and personal coming of Christ before the Millennium. As Newcome's Translation of the New Testament is scarce, one or two Extracts are subjoined from his notes. He says, on Matt. xxiv. 39, "This may be fulfilled at the future restoration of the Jews, see Luke i. 32, 33." On Matt. xxvi. 34, "I think that our Lord's words do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to his future state of glory."

On Luke i. 32, 33. "Compare Isa. ix. 7. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14. The spiritual kingdom of the Messiah will be everlasting, and when the Jews as a people shall believe in him, and be restored to their own country, there will be a magnificent display of his royalty. See Ezek. xxxvii. 24."

On Rev. xx. 4. *The souls of those, that is those. And they lived again.* I understand this not figuratively, of a peaceable and flourishing state of the Church on earth, but literally of a real resurrection,

and of a real reign with Christ, who will display his Royal glory in the New Jerusalem. "This is the great Sabbatism, or rest of the Church." Barnabas, in Daubuz, *Lived not again*. Mede, Daubuz, and others, argue, that as a real resurrection is meant here, a figurative cannot be meant in the foregoing verse."

The sentiments of BISHOP NEWTON are so well known, and his book so common, that it is needless to quote from him.

DAUBUZ, in his work on Revelation, chap. xix. 11. "This is Christ himself, who rides upon his white horse, as appears by what is said hereafter. He is to act therein himself visibly, without deputies, at least such as he has already employed. . . . Christ comes now to settle himself in his kingdom, with his saints, who are now to be gathered to him."

On Rev. xx. 4. he is equally express as to the literal resurrection, and gives these reasons why the persons of the martyrs are denominated souls: "The first is, that $\psi\chi\eta$ is said of a dead man, upon the account of the shedding of his blood, which is as his soul; the second is that $\psi\chi\eta$ signifies a *dead body* (he here refers to passages in the Septuagint and Targum, and to Schindler in proof of this); and in this sense one may also understand that place of Rev. vi. 9. Now these souls thus shed or dead, are to live and reign. It being therefore certain that these very souls are they which must be understood thus dead and living, and that it is not possible to understand it of any other sort of men but of the primitive martyrs—it is now as certain that in this Millennial state they revive again, and reign with Christ. This I am sure of, that these words can only be understood of such as have been slain, not of any other sort of men, and so cannot

denote any collective body of men in a mortal state. The whole tenor of the prophecy leads us to understand this of a proper resurrection of the dead martyrs. Is it not therefore a sad thing that some Divines should presume so much upon the penetration of their wits, as to pretend, from the single consideration of this place, without having any other knowledge of the œconomy of this prophecy, to determine negatively, and against such a proper resurrection?"

LANCASTER abridges Daubuz, and follows him in his views. I am disposed to think that the prevailing views of those who have diligently studied and written upon the prophecies, are those of a præ-millennial personal Advent, and first literal Resurrection.

Additions to page 99.

The French reformed church in their acts at the Synod of Gap, in 1603, directed the following article to be inserted in their confession of faith.

"Whereas the bishop of Rome has erected for himself a temporary monarchy in the Christian world, and usurping a sovereign authority and lordship over all churches and pastors, exalts himself to that degree of insolence, as to be called God, and will be adored, arrogating unto himself all power in heaven and earth; and to dispose of all ecclesiastical matters, to define articles of faith, to authorise and expound at his pleasure the Sacred Scriptures, and to buy and sell the souls of men—to dispense with vows, oaths, and covenants, and to institute new ordinances of religious worship. And in the civil state he tramples under foot all lawful authority of magistrates, setting up and putting down kings, disposing of kings, and of their kingdoms at his pleasure. We therefore

believe and maintain that he is truly and properly *the Antichrist, the Son of perdition*, predicted by the holy Prophets,—that great whore clothed with scarlet, sitting upon seven mountains in that great city which had dominion over the kings of the earth; and we hope and wait that the Lord, according to his promise, and as he hath already begun, will confound him by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming." See Quick's Synodicon, vol i. 226—227.

The article offending the French Government, *the printing* of it was superseded—Dailé, however the moderator of the synod, in 1659, told the king's commissioner, "As for those words *Antichrist*, in our Liturgy, and *idolatry*, and *deceits of Satan*, which are found in our Confession, they be words declaring the grounds and reasons of our separation from the Romish Church; and doctrines which our fathers maintained in the worst of times, and which we are fully resolved, as they, through the aid of divine grace, never to abandon, but to keep faithfully and inviolably to the last gasp." Vol. ii. 513.

The Synod of Gap stated "That this was the common faith and confession of all our churches, and of this present Synod,—and one of the principal causes of our separation from the church of Rome; and that this confession was contained in and extracted out of the Holy Scriptures, and had been sealed with the blood of a world of martyrs. Therefore, all the faithful, be they pastors or private Christians, are exhorted constantly to persist in the profession of it, and openly and boldly to confess it." Vol. i. 231.



